A NEW, EASY, AND EXPEDITIOUS

METHOD OF DISCHARGING THE NATIONAL DEBT:

OR, A

PLAN OF REFORMATION OF THE ENGLISH CONSTITUTION IN CHURCH,

PRACTICABLE NOT ONLY WITHOUT DETRIMENT, BUT WITH EMOLUMENT,

TO THE

CONSTITUTION IN STATE;

AND

Designed as Introductory to a wise political Institution preferable to, and perfective of it.

Both respectfully submitted to the serious Consideration of the PUBLIC in general, and of the LEGISLATURE in particular;—and interspersed with free Animadversions on a Part of the late Address of the Convocation to the King; accompanied with a farcical Description of an Episcopo-military Triumvirate, arming for the American Warfare.

By FRANCIS STONE, M. A. F. S. A. C. S. P. C.
Rector of COLD-NORTON, ESSEX.

"Diruit, ædificat, mutat quadrata rotundis."
HOR. Ep. Lib. 1. Lin. 100.

——"Tentanda Via est, quâ me quoque possim
"Tollere Humo, Victorque Virûm volitare per Ora."
VIRG. Geo. Lib. 3. Lin. 8 & 9.

LONDON:
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M DCC LXXVI.

A NEW, EASY, AND EXPEDITIOUS

METHOD OF DISCHARGING

THE

NATIONAL DEBT:

OR, A

PLAN FOR REGENERATION

OF THE

ENGLISH CONSTITUTION IN CHURCH,

PRACTICABLE NOT ONLY WITHOUT

DETRIMENT, BUT WITH EMOLUMENT,

TO THE

CONSTITUTION IN STATE;

AND

Designed as Introductory to a wide political Inquiry.

Comprehensive and effective at it.

Both reformatory and conservative Conciliation

of the PEOPLE in the LEGISLATURE

To Parliament — and the Nation — Free Animadversion.

Leave on a Petition of the Convocation

to the King [illegible]

of an Episcopo-Monarchy [illegible] Parliament, praying for the

Divine Word.

By FRANCIS STOSH, M.A. F.S.A. C.S.P.C.

Rector of Chipping-Norton, Oxon.

"Quod medicabile, mutare quærere nolunto."

"Mos Temporis Hujus, Veteribus Vitiis volenti-

"Ubere Ilamo, Vetustate Vitium volenti-

LONDON:

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MDCCLXXXVI.

Spectatum admissi, risum teneatis, amici?

NEW, EASY, AND EXPEDITIOUS, &c.

BY way of introduction to this mighty production, which may be thought to promiſe great things, and perform nothing, like Horace's Mountain-in-Labour,

'(Quid dignum tanto feret hic Promiſſor Hiatu?
'Parturient Montes; naſcetur ridiculus Mus')

I give an explication of thoſe Capitals diſplayed in the Title-page, C. S. P. C. — They are the initials of *Chairman* of the *Society* of the *Petitioning Clergy*; —— an invaluable, and not altogether unmerited, honour conferred on me by my Brethren of this Society, at their laſt meeting at the Feathers-Tavern, Strand; — which I am ſuppoſed to enjoy, 'till I reſign my ſeat to my worthy ſucceſſor at the next, who ſhall be nameleſs, he not having given me a commiſſion, nor have I judged it material to apply to him for a licenſe, to publiſh his name.——I ſhall therefore reſt ſatisfied with allotting him that portion of praiſe, which is his juſt due, by intimating, that

he ſeems to be a young Elihu, whoſe counſels, ſpirit, and integrity, it is probable, will not diſgrace any honorable cauſe, in which he may be engaged throughout life.

The offenſive thirty-nine articles of the faith of the church of England, which contain a multiplicity of unintelligible and contradictory metaphyſical propoſitions, and its liturgy, I am inclined to regard, in conſequence of a repeated, but unſucceſsful, addreſs to the late Houſe of Commons, for the removal of the grievance of ſubſcription to them, as comprizing, and in every tittle expreſſive of, the avowed form of faith, as well of that deceaſed branch of the legiſlature, taken collectively, not individually, as of thoſe of the clergy, and of others, from whom ſubſcription is required, who joined not, either in the petition, or in the ſubſequent bill.

But, be that as it may, it is certain, that a legal deliverance from a yoke ſo grievous to the free-born mind, is not yet obtained, and that it is ſtill impoſed on candidates for orders; *on* clergymen offering themſelves to the biſhop for inſtitution to *ordinary* church-preferment; namely, bene-

fices

fices attended with the cure of ſouls;—*on* graduates in the univerſity of Oxford, whether in arts, divinity, law, phyſick, or, O moſt ridiculous! muſic, as though a man were not qualified to play on the fiddle or organ, without previouſly ſubſcribing to the truth of abſtruſe and ſenſeleſs metaphyſical jargon;—*on* ſchoolmaſters;—and, laſtly, O moſt *indignum facinus! on* youths of ſixteen, (*experto crede,*) when they preſent themſelves for matriculation in that antient ſeat of literature, who, at that raw and unexperienced age, ſubſcribe this *human* ſyſtem of *divinity.*——The affair of ſubſcription is uſually huddled over, as a matter of form, and without previous care taken to acquaint young men with the contents of the articles.

This being the true ſtate of the caſe, it is an object worthy of inquiry to know, to whom theſe ſeveral orders of men are indebted for the continuance of this burthen ſaddled on their conſciences. — The effect can with eaſe be traced up to its primary cauſe, namely, the cunning craftineſs of Hierarchs.—In Lords ſpiritual this increaſing grievance originates.

Do they not grudge the pains of repreſenting to their ſovereign, "in all humility', (as they expreſs themſelves in the late addreſs of the convocation to him) and in a clear point of view, the hard caſe of ſubmitting to ſubſcription, in theſe days of increaſing religious knowledge, to a ſyſtem of ſuppoſed chriſtian faith, compiled, above two centuries agone, by our reforming anceſtors, at their firſt emerſion from the groſs corruptions of popery?

Does not their viſible attachment to ſelf-aggrandiſement,—their unremitting ſolicitude for the advancement of their temporal intereſts, which ſeems to engroſs their thoughts and time, withhold them from acknowledging to his Majeſty, with ſincerity and frankneſs, that, at the opening dawn of the light of truth and knowledge, which had been for ages obſcured by the thick black miſt of error and ignorance; theſe men were not aware, as their poſterity now are, that, by requiring ſubſcription to human interpretations of, and additions to, the word of God, they not only made void the word of God, but overturned the very principle of their own diſſent and departure

parture from the church of Rome; which could not in fact be juſtified otherwiſe, than by inſiſting, in oppoſition to her cunningly-deviſed fables, on the ſcriptures of the old and new Teſtament, as the ſole excluſive rule of the faith and practice of Chriſtians, (which, notwithſtanding they inconſiſtently do, in very ſtrong terms, in their ſixth article) and, agreeably thereto, making ſubſcription to them alone obligatory on candidates for the holy miniſtry?

Does not the luſt of power and wealth —the love of the world and of the pride of life, forbid them to feelingly explain to their King the injuries, to which our moſt pure religion is expoſed from Deiſts, who are apt to unjuſtly charge Chriſtianity with inculcating thoſe metaphyſical abſurdities, which are imputable merely to the human doctrines contained in the Articles and Liturgy?

Theſe are quæries, which it is difficult to reſolve in their favour.—For, though it be one of the amiable properties of Chriſtian charity, 'to think no evil;' and to '*believe all things*', — the beſt of every man, and conſequently of Lords ſpiritual, while the

mere ſhadow of a reaſon is left for a favorable opinion; — yet a knowledge of the world will tempt a man to ſuſpect, that they are reſtrained by ſuch ſordid motives from doing their duty in theſe inſtances.

But, if the Biſhops could be perſuaded (a circumſtance! of which I ſhould abſolutely deſpair, if the ſame principle of charity did not diſpoſe me to 'hope all things, 'and hope even againſt hope') to ſtate the affair of ſubſcription in its true bad light to his Majeſty; it is preſumed, he would rejoice at being ſelected as the happy inſtrument in the hands of the Divine Providence, of re-eſtabliſhing the goſpel on its own ſolid baſis, and of delivering its Miniſters from that worſt ſpecies of ſlavery, the ſpiritual bondage, under which they have long groaned and laboured.

I entertain likewiſe that favorable opinion of the two other eſtates of the realm, and of adminiſtration and the public, that they would be glad to concur with their Sovereign, duly apprized of the rectitude of the meaſure by the Lords ſpiritual, in accompliſhing a point ſo acceptable to God and Chriſt, as that cannot but be, which

has for its avowed object the emancipation of the word of God from the commandments of men, and the reſtauration of its Miniſters to the unreſtrained exerciſe of the religious liberty, 'wherewith Chriſt has 'made them free.'

But, in fact, the Biſhops have not publicly, nor does it appear, that they have privately, addreſt, or given encouragement to hope, that they will addreſs, their Sovereign in behalf of an undertaking, ſo eſſential to the intereſts of Chriſtianity, and ſo worthy of a King, who juſtly glories in his birth, as a Chriſtian and a Briton.—— They ſeem ſatisfied with ſoliciting, with profeſſions of ſuperlative lowlineſs of mind, the Royal permiſſion to make this truly-Right-Reverend declaration, — 'Permit 'us, Sire, *in all humility*, to ſay, that the 'eccleſiaſtical part of our conſtitution is 'no leſs excellent than the civil.'—(See the late Addreſs of the Convocation)—Though inſtructed in the expreſs duty of Chriſtian Biſhops by the example of the Petitioning Clergy, &c. they neglect to move in the Houſe of Lords for a removal of ſubſcription to the thirty-nine Articles and Liturgy,

gy, thereby virtually declaring, either that they think them agreeable to, and equally infallible with, the goſpel itſelf;—though perhaps they would heſitate to make ſuch a declaration in expreſs terms; —or that religion itſelf is but a mere State-machine. — I am not uncharitable enough to think, that they regard the moſt pure religion of Chriſt in a light ſtrictly political. However, infidels collect, from the viſible indifference of the Biſhops in Chriſtian concerns, that they are their brethren in unbelief,—and, moreover, holy hypocrites, and the principal actors in a ſolemn religious farce.

But, however remiſs they have been, or may be, in the diſcharge of their duty; it is incumbent on me to act from a conviction of my own perſonal obligations,—and, conſequently, to embrace every legal method, which occurs, within the compaſs of my ability, to contribute my mite towards the ſubverſion of our preſent conſtitution in Church in general, and of Dioceſan Epiſcopacy and ſpiritual Baronies in particular.—As they are wholly repugnant to apoſtolic precept, ſo alſo the conduct of

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the Lords-Biſhops, in the inſtance of this their culpable neglect, proves them to be injurious to the intereſts of Chriſtianity; which can never be re-inſtated in its original ſimplicity of doctrine, or purity in practice, till every ſpecies of hierarchy be effectually demoliſhed.

One Biſhop indeed is ſaid to be the author of an anonymous pamphlet, intituled, 'The Propriety of requiring Subſcription, &c.' which is manifeſtly in favour of the one grand object of the petitioners.—But even he has not hitherto ſummoned Chriſtian fortitude ſufficient to ſtand forth publicly, in ſupport of it, in that houſe, where he enjoys a ſeat, and the conſequent right of ſpeech and ſuffrage, in his legiſlative capacity as a Baron.

Biſhop Clayton, at a time, when religious liberty was not ſo fully underſtood, and ſo generally claimed, as at preſent, moved, in the Iriſh Houſe of Lords, for expunging the Athanaſian creed from the liturgy.—But ſuch a biſhop is a *rara avis in terris*, and is not ſeen, like the fabled Phœnix, once in a century.—It is therefore become abſolutely neceſſary, in order

to

to effect the redreſs of the grievance of ſubſcription to human ſyſtems of divinity; to ſtrike at the hierarchy itſelf, which is, in truth, an anti-Chriſtian eſtabliſhment.

Pappa at Rome is the arch-Antichriſt, and his church is abſolutely anti-Chriſtian, or, to ſpeak ſcholaſtically, anti-Chriſtian in the abſtract. But epiſcopal ſenators in England are anti-Chriſts in an inferior degree, and their church is relatively anti-Chriſtian, or anti-Chriſtian in the concrete; — for what conſtitutes an anti-Chriſt, but either a total or a partial uſurpation of the civil power?

Now the Lords ſpiritual not only bear a part in the buſineſs of civil legiſlation, a province foreign to that of a Chriſtian paſtor;—but they alſo betray another mark of anti-Chriſt in a love of pre-eminence in the church of Chriſt, like Diotrephes in ſcripture, ſignally exhibited in their invidious diſtinction of the miniſters of the goſpel by the different denominations of ſuperior and inferior clergy,—a diſtinction unknown to, and unpractiſed by, the apoſtles,—who, I really think, were not a whit behind dioceſan Biſhops '*in all humility*';

parti-

particularly that of the practical ſpecies, however they might be defective in an oſtentatious parade of the verbal profeſſion of it.

A third mark of anti-Chriſt in ſpiritual Lords is an uſurpation of dominion over the hearts and conſciences of men, inſtanced in their culpable omiſſion to obtain a parliamentary relief of the aggrieved petitioners, attended with this aggravating circumſtance, that their conduct herein reſembles that of the Phariſees of old, who 'laid on men's ſhoulders burthens 'grievous to be born, which themſelves 'would not touch with one of their 'fingers.' —— For theſe ſenatorial Biſhops, and the other occupiers of *extraordinary*, and, ſhall I ſay, needleſs church-preferment, are, by ſome unaccountable, but, no doubt, politic hierarchical, contrivance, exempted from bearing their ſhare of the heavy burthen of ſubſcription.

Under the article of extraordinary church-preferment I comprehend thoſe comfortable fine-cures, called Dignities,—namely, Prebends, Canonries, Chancellorſhips, Arch-Deaconries, and Deanries; thoſe lucrative

crative poſts, Dioceſan Biſhopries;—and, laſtly, thoſe highly emolumental and princely ſtations, Arch-Biſhoprics.

Theſe worldly dignities of the church, and the very name of an arch-Biſhopric, were unknown to the apoſtles; — and Biſhops were merely local paſtors of their reſpective Chriſtian flocks. — The Biſhop of Antioch was the overſeer of the church, or congregation, of believers in Antioch,— not ruling them with the uſurped exerciſe of temporal dominion, and of legiſlative and judicial authority, —— but feeding them with the milk of God's word, and nouriſhing them in the faith and morality of Chriſt.

Under the ſavage execution of the ſevere edicts of the perſecuting Gentile Emperors of Rome, Chriſtianity gained ground; the blood of the martyrs was the ſeed of the church. The ſerious, ſober, and conſiderate, of mankind, admiring the exemplary conſtancy, and fortitude, with which the Chriſtians, rather than apoſtatize, embraced death in its moſt frightful forms, accompanied with every ſpecies of torture, which the diabolical rage of their heathen

heathen adverſaries could invent, were induced to examine the principles, evidences, precepts, and hopes of that religion, which could inſpire its profeſſors with ſuch unparalleled heroiſm, and magnanimous contempt of death; and, conſequently, became ſincere converts to the faith of the goſpel.

When the converſion of Conſtantin took place, this humane Emperor ſtopped the effuſion of Chriſtian blood, ſhed during Diocleſian's perſecution. Then the affairs of the Chriſtians took a different turn, and, unhappily, ſuſtained a change for the worſe: —for Conſtantin, not ſatisfied with giving merely a laſting peace, and reſt, to the church, from the inveterate and cruel malice of pagan oppreſſors; in an erroneous, though well-meant, zeal for the advancement of the Chriſtian cauſe, heaped temporal power, wealth, and grandeur on thoſe, whoſe religion inſtructed them to 'crucify 'the world, with its affections, and luſts;' — and thereby, contrary to his intention, kindled a war betwixt Chriſtians themſelves, which has continued, with a greater or leſs degree of animoſity and rancour, to this day. Biſhoprics then became objects of worldly ambition,

ambition, a lure, which ſucceſsfully operated, to the unſpeakable prejudice of the Chriſtian religion. Hence they, who before 'denied and hated the world,' courted and 'loved it;' — and we behold, with grief, the meek, and lowly, diſciples of Jeſus transformed into contentious, and arrogant competitors for eccleſiaſtical riches and honours.

This deplorable depravation of morals was accompanied with an equal corruption in doctrine.—The ſimplicity and unity of belief in Jeſus, as the Meſſiah, was exchanged for the incomprehenſibility and multiplicity of metaphyſical articles of faith.—Then began Chriſtians to perſecute Chriſtians, with a virulence and fury equal to that which they had before experienced from the intereſted abettors of eſtabliſhed gentile Polytheiſm. — Homo-ouſians and homoi-ouſians

— 'Fell out, they knew not why',
. . . . 'Fought, like mad, or drunk,'
'For dame religion, as for punk' *,

and, in their hot, uncharitable diſputes, concerning the conſubſtantiality of the ſon, with

* Butler's Hudibras.

with the father, preſumptuouſly anathematized each other for the maintenance of this and other fanciful ſpeculative opinions, which neither they who broached, nor they who propagated them, were able to underſtand. A woeful conſequence this of that 'wiſdom', that falſe vain philoſophy, or ſophiſtry, by which the world knew not God,—that 'wiſdom of the world,' which 'is fooliſh-'neſs with God.'—But let us draw a veil over ſo affecting a ſcene, and the ſubſequent butcheries of the Biſhops of Rome. It more concerns my immediate purpoſe, to advert to that *religious* proſecution of a worthy clergyman, which now ſubſiſts, and originated in the *ſpiritual* court of the Biſhop of Glouceſter. As I propoſe to enlarge on this proſecution in another part of this pamphlet, I ſhall only here obſerve, that if conſcientious miniſters of the goſpel, officiating in the church of England, be not ſecure, in a proteſtant country, from proſecution or perſecution, on account of a free delivery of their ſentiments on religious points, it is become abſolutely neceſſary to extirpate that barbarous church-policy, of which only the moſt luxuriant branches were amputated at the reforma-

tion. The ſuppreſſion of eccleſiaſtical dignities in general, and of dioceſan epiſcopacy in particular; — in ſhort, a complete alteration, and amendment, of our conſtitution in church is become a meaſure, not leſs expedient and ſalutary now, than the deſtruction of the monaſteries was, in the leſs enlightened days of *ſtern Hal.* It is a truth known to all thinking Chriſtians, that the *ſpiritual* cedar of Lebanon, Chriſtianity, cannot ſpread and flouriſh, while the corrupt tree, church-policy, be ſuffered to grow with it, check its increaſe, and draw all the nouriſhment from it. — Let us then apply the axe to the root of this noxious tree, and fell it to the ground. Then, and not till then, will the *tree of life* revive, and thrive—bring forth plentifully the preſent wholeſome fruits, holineſs and virtue, in the heart and *life of man,* which will be ſucceeded by his enjoyment of its future rich products, *everlaſting life* and happineſs. If theſe irrefragable arguments, in recommendation of the annihilation of church-policy in this nominally Chriſtian land, could require additional ſupport, it might be found in the diſ-

graceful

graceful reflection, that the evils of church-power, and church-wealth, as though they were not complete in themſelves, are conſiderably aggravated by the very unequal diſtribution of the various church-dignities, which fall not to the lot of as many different individuals. On the contrary, one man ſhall not only graſp at, but be permitted to enjoy, not merely a trinity, but, a quaternity, and even a quinity, in unity of eccleſiaſtical benefices,—namely, a biſhopric in one part of the kingdom, a deanery in another, a prebend in a third, and a rectory and vicarage in a fourth and fifth.

Thus a few hierarchs ſwim in affluence, while the wretched ſubalterns, thoſe ſtarvelings, the hired curates, men! their equals in a liberal education, in a liberal turn of mind, and in literary merit and moral worth, are, to the diſgrace, as well of humanity as Chriſtianity, ſuffered to ſink in indigence, or to pick up a ſcanty ſubſiſtence, as their parochial drudges.—In ſhort, the very diſproportionate diviſion of church revenues and church-ſervices is univerſally notorious; — ſo, that there would be no

occaſion for me to ‘ tell it in' England, or to publiſh it in' the ſtreets of London, were it not right to remonſtrate againſt it in print, however ineffectual ſuch remonſtrance may prove.

——————— ‘ Pudet, hæc opprobria nobis
‘ Et dici potuiſſe, et non potuiſſe refelli.'

But, in truth, I cannot blame thoſe of the clergy, who are ſo fortunate, as to ſecure to themſelves a multiplicity of church-preferment. I really think, that if, in conſequence of an alliance, by conſanguinity or affinity, with nobility, I could acquire valuable church-emoluments, or, conſiſtently with my chriſtian principles, ſtoop to practiſe the baſe parafitical arts, uſually neceſſary to obtain them, I ſhould not ſcruple to accept a Biſhopric,—much leſs, if accompanied with that engaging appendage, an accumulation of benefices; not doubting but that my conſcience would enable me, without bluſhing, to bear the golden weight.

The object of my cenſure is the eccleſiaſtical ſyſtem itſelf, as well in this reſpect, as in others; — not the individuals, who conform to it, and reap its fruits.

It

It is inconceivable, how much England would be benefited, both in its political and religious intereſts, if the three branches of its legiſlature would unite,—*in* diveſting ſpiritual Biſhoprics of temporal baronies, —*in* annihilating dioceſan, and creating parochial, epiſcopacy; —*in* aboliſhing all eccleſiaſtical dignities, and the impolitic and vexatious mode of providing for the clergy by rectorial and vicarial tithes,—*in* deſtroying the whole of the preſent church-ſyſtem and polity; —*in* ſuppreſſing the odious power, claimed by the ſpiritual court, of oppreſſing his majeſty's ſubjects with vexatious proſecutions, on the ſcore of public or private declaration of opinion in points of faith, when ſuch declaration be apprehended to claſh with the doctrines of the eſtabliſhment; — *in* not merely regulating its future proceedings by the practice of the courts of common-law, but in abſolutely aboliſhing this rigorous and ruinous court,—erecting in its ſtead a mild and leſs expenſive common-law-court, to be empowered to take cognizance of objects of a civil nature alone, ſuch as the probate of wills, teſtamentary cauſes, and

the grant of marriage-licences and divorces, —thoſe valuable gems in the archi-epiſcopal diadems! long wreſted from the civil magiſtrate by the craft natural to every *pontifex maximus*,—and employing for theſe purpoſes the preſent advocates and proctors, &c. under the new denomination of counſellors and attornies, &c.—*in* ſeizing, by a repeal of the ſtatute of Mortmain, the lands and tithes of the church, and all other its revenues, including the ſum, it is ſaid, of ſix hundred thouſand pounds, and upwards, daily accumulating, which has ariſen from the firſt-fruits and yearly-tenths of church-benefices, applied, in the reign of Anne, to the eſtabliſhment of a fund for augmenting ſmall livings;—*in* purchaſing, on equitable terms, the limited, alternate, and perpetual, right of preſentation to livings, which is veſted in the univerſities and their reſpective colleges, in various lay-bodies corporate, and in individuals, whether eccleſiaſtics, or laymen; it being reaſonable and juſt, that they ſhould, at leaſt, be re-imburſed the money which they expended in the purchaſe of the ſaid rights of patronage;—

and,

and, laſtly, *in* appropriating the immenſe produce accruing from a ſale of church-lands and church-tythes, and from the ſeizure of church-funds and revenues of every kind, to the ſole purpoſe of an immediate diſcharge of the debt of the nation.

Together with this propoſal of an accompliſhment of that great and deſirable national object, the entire ſubverſion of the conſtitution in church, as it now ſtands, eſtabliſhed by law, to be effected by the triple legiſlative authority of the conſtitution in ſtate, or, in plain words, by act of parliament, — the following new arrangement of eccleſiaſtical concerns is, with all due deference, ſubmitted to the conſideration of the three eſtates of the realm, viz.

Firſt, Let every beneficed clergyman, from an affluent fine-cured archbiſhop to an indigent parochial vicar,—in ſhort, let all, who poſſeſs church-preferment, of every kind and value, on the preſent church-eſtabliſhment, be enjoined, by act of parliament, to deliver in to the legiſlature, upon oath, or upon the ſolemn aſſeveration of

the Quakers, the amount of the clear yearly value of their reſpective preferment.

Secondly, Though it be propoſed, that the ſuppreſſion of the uſeleſs or rather *no*-offices of Arch-Biſhops, Dioceſan Biſhops, and thoſe ſubordinate dignitaries, Deans and their Chapters, Chancellors, Archdeacons,—and of all clergymen employed in cathedral-ſervice, ſuch as Precentors, Chanters, and Minor-Cannons, or poſſeſt of major and minor church-dignities, and of ſine-cure benefices of every kind, be appointed, by act of parliament, to take inſtantaneous effect, without exception; yet, that clergymen of the preſent church-eſtabliſhment ſo beneficed, may not be furniſhed with the ſhadow of a complaint, that they are injured by an invaſion of their property, let them all be permitted to enjoy penſions, *durante vitâ*, to the full amount of their ſuppreſt church-revenues.

But let the Lords ſpiritual be inſtantly deprived of a ſeat and vote in the Houſe of Lords; — as, alſo, let beneficed clergymen of every denomination, who enjoy at preſent the privilege of a vote at the election of the Commons, in virtue of their ſpiritual

ritual profeſſion, ſuffer the immediate loſs of the ſame,—and be put on the ſame footing with the reſt of his majeſty's ſubjects in this reſpect,—that is, be entitled to the right of ſuffrage at ſuch election, only in virtue of the uſual civil qualifications ariſing from freehold-eſtates, &c. which, perchance, may be the private property, as well of eccleſiaſtics, as lay-men.

(N. B. That part of this propoſal, which reſpects the immediate ſuppreſſion of eccleſiaſtical dignities, and the allotment to their preſent poſſeſſors of life-annuities, equivalent to their ſuppreſt church-revenues, differs more in mode, than in ſubſtance, from the wiſely-concerted project of the court of Liſbon, which, as I am informed, ſince the atrocious attempts of the Jeſuits on the life of the king, has judged it expedient to aboliſh the canonries of their patriarchal, or metropolitical, church, as they become vacant by the deaths of the preſent ſet of canons;—and to empty the revenues thereof into the royal coffers.)

Thirdly, and laſtly; Let one equal and only order of miniſters of the goſpel, under

der the new title of parochial Biſhops, or paſtors, and with the appointment of an equality of maintenance, ariſing from the ſtipend of two hundred pounds per annum each, to be ſecured by parliament, levied by tax on the public, and paid by the Crown, be ſubſtituted in lieu of the various ranks of ſuperior and inferior clergy, which, to the manifeſt injury of genuine and primitive Chriſtianity, at preſent prevail.—And let the original eſtabliſhment, and the continued ſucceſſion, of theſe parochial Biſhops be accompliſhed in the following method, which ſeems to be equitable, eaſy, and, though gradual, yet eventually effectual, and as expeditious, as the nature of the thing will admit.

Firſt, Let Rectors, Vicars, in ſhort, parochial incumbents of every denomination, on the preſent church-eſtabliſhment, who poſſeſs benefices attended with the cure of ſouls, be continued in the poſſeſſion of one ſuch benefice each,—and, aſſuming the new appellation of parochial Biſhops, or paſtors, receive the ſtipend of two hundred pounds per annum each, in lieu of their ſuppreſt church-lands, tithes, and other ſpecies of

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church-revenue, provided the amount of their former income, which aroſe from the ſaid ſuppreſt lands, &c. fell ſhort of that annual ſum.—In caſe it exceeded the ſaid ſum, let them enjoy the full amount of their former annual income, in the way of annual ſalary, for life;—but let their reſpective parochial biſhoprics be reduced to the ſaid ſtandard-ſtipend of two hundred pounds per annum each, at their reſpective deaths.

Secondly. Let parochial biſhoprics be, without delay, filled, from time to time, as they become vacant, with the preſent race of *ſpiritual journeymen*, or hired curates, according to ſeniority, on the ſaid reformed plan of equal maintenance, namely, the annual ſtipend of two hundred pounds each. But, as a portion of time, notwithſtanding the prohibition of pluralities, which will in part open to them an immediate ſucceſſion to parochial biſhoprics, muſt neceſſarily intervene, before this uſeful, but much-injured and famiſhed, order of men, can be thus aboliſhed, and entirely provided for as parochial paſtors; it ſeems highly reaſonable and equitable, that,

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in the interval, they ſhould receive from the public a maintenance, conſiſting at leaſt of one hundred pounds per annum each.

Thirdly, and laſtly; When this race of curates, whoſe reſpective ſeniority (I mean not ſeniority of age, but priority of ordination) may be aſcertained from the dates of their epiſcopal papers of orders, or from certificates extracted from dioceſan-regiſters, ſhall be thus gradually extinct,—and altogether ſucceed to parochial Biſhoprics,—let a continued ſucceſſion of theſe parochial Biſhops or paſtors (for, in reality, they are terms ſynonymous) be equitably eſtabliſhed in the manner following, viz.

Firſt, On the demiſe of any one paſtor, let the offer of filling the vacancy be made to the ſenior member of the univerſities of Oxford and Cambridge alternately; and, if he refuſe it, to the next in ſeniority, till one be found to accept it.

To preclude all occaſion of *illiberal* contention between theſe academic ſocieties, which are alike engaged in the honourable purſuit of *liberal* literature,—*quæ humanitatis ſcientiâ, liberaliſſimiſque optimarum artium ſtudiis, æque, et, uti ſpero, aſſiduè, ſunt verſatæ*, let the *important* punctilio, whether

whether of the two univerſities, ſhould be honoured with the nomination of the firſt ſucceſſor to a vacant parochial Biſhopric, be decided by the fair mode of lot; — though Oxford be confeſſedly the ſeminary of learning prior in antiquity to Cambridge,—and though the propoſer of this church-reforming plan would as confeſſedly give the preference to the former, as having been a member, and being now a graduate, of the univerſity of Oxford, — and, moreover, well pleaſed, that he ſucked the milk of that *alma mater*, notwithſtanding her viſible and culpable predilection for her babe of grace, ſtiled ORTHODOXY.

N. B. This ſame Orthodoxy, by the bye, is a religious proteus, a ſhuffling, ſhifting, jeſuitical animal, who aſſumes various ſhapes in various countries, being a Mufti at Conſtantinople, a Pope at Rome, a ſenior Preſbyter at Geneva, and an Arch-Biſhop in England, and dexterouſly perſonates the different ſpiritual characters of the muſſulman,—the Roman—the Dutch Calviniſt,—and the Engliſh Arminian, but is never ſeen in that of the Chriſtian.

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Orthodoxy's pedigree is as follows;—his ſire was the noted *Idolatry*, got out of *Gregory's Civil-Tyranny* by his grand-ſire, the famous Roman, *Religious Deſpotiſm*. His dam was *Superſtition*, twin-ſiſter to *Idolatry*. Orthodoxy is remarkable for his breed of *Bigotry* and *Perſecution*. He won ſeveral plates from *Heretic*, on the ſpiritual New-market-turf, Smithfield, but was at laſt diſtanced by *Reformation*. He has been matched, at different times, againſt *Pym's Preſbyterian*, and *Cromwell's Independent*, and loſt the firſt heat with both; but, having a good bottom, came off winner in the long run. Orthodoxy lately received a kick from *Hancock's American*, *Anti-Biſhop*, which, fortunately, producing but a temporary lameneſs, did not diſable him from running, on *Saint Stephen's* courſe, againſt *Clerical Petitioner*, from whom he won two bye-matches. Orthodoxy is ſtill found in wind and limb, perfectly free from ſpavin and ſplint, and from blemiſh of every kind;—is healthy, vigorous, and in good condition, either for running, or *leaping*. But this is principally owing to the care of his keepers, the

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mitred black-legs, who, ſince he loſt his old favourite groom, Sacheverell, have perſonally condeſcended to preſerve him in fine order, both for the turf and cover. — In reſpect to the latter, there cannot be a ſtronger proof, than that *Alliance betwixt church and ſtate*, though the laſt of his get, ſince they took him in hand, is very ſtrong, bony, and *tight*-made. In running, Orthodoxy has nothing to fear, but from *Chriſtian Truth and Liberty*, who is in training, and has excellent properties. He riſes three or four next graſs; but will be kept back from ſtarting againſt Orthodoxy, till he be full-aged; — when his friends are in great expectation, that he will beat Orthodoxy all-hollow, without whip or ſpur, maugre all the ſkill and management of his epiſcopal jockies to bring him within the diſtance-poſt. The colours of the riders are already fixt. Orthodoxy's rider will be in *black* or *purple*, — and that of Chriſtian Truth and Liberty will wear a *white* jacket. Much ſport and company are expected at the races, and the bets will run high betwixt the High-Church and the Low-Church, — the Whigs and the Tories,

Tories, — the Revolutioniſts and the Jacobites,—the Republicans and the Royaliſts,—when the event will prove, who are the knowing-ones.

But, to return from this ludicrous digreſſion to the ſerious proſecution of my Church-reforming plan.

Secondly; Let the academic, previouſly to his entrance on the function of parochial paſtor, be required to produce before three paſtors, whoſe pariſhes are bounded by that of the deceaſed, a teſtimonial of his general good moral behaviour, for the full term of three years laſt paſt, ſigned by the head, and the ſix ſenior reſident members, of his college.

Thirdly; Let theſe three paſtors examine him, in reſpect to his knowledge of the original Hebrew and Greek of the ſacred writings; and if, in their united judgment, he be not eſteemed deficient therein, let them proceed, in the next place, to require his ſubſcription to theſe two poſitions; namely,

Firſt; *I am perſuaded, that the goſpel, or the will of God revealed by Jeſus Chriſt, contains*

contains all doctrine required of neceſſity for eternal ſalvation.

Secondly; *I am determined, out of this goſpel, to inſtruct the people committed to my charge, and to teach nothing, as required of neceſſity to eternal ſalvation, but that, which, I ſhall be perſuaded, may be concluded and proved by the ſaid goſpel.*

Fourthly and laſtly; To this ſubſcription may be added, together with the oaths to government, or, in lieu of them, the ſolemn aſſeveration of the Quakers, another ſubſcription (not to the truth, but) to the public peruſal of the preſent, or any other, liturgy, which the three eſtates of the realm ſhall be pleaſed to appoint to be read in churches, as being, in their judgment, leſs generally exceptionable, than the preſent eſtabliſhed form of common prayer.

But, if the continuance of the ſame be judged eligible by the legiſlature, it is to be hoped, they will expunge from it the creed ſtiled Athanaſian, as it gives great and juſt offence to almoſt every member of the church of England, whether he be a clergyman, or layman;—ſome objecting to

the general doctrine contained in it,—and moſt to its particular damnatory clauſes.—And, whatever liturgy the legiſlature may deem expedient to be adopted, it ſeems adviſable, that particular care be taken to ſet forth in the preamble to the act of parliament, impoſing ſubſcription to the public peruſal of it on the parochial biſhops or paſtors, that the legiſlative body do not conſider any liturgy compoſed by fallible men, as infallible, or equal, in point of truth and authority, with the word of God; but, that they injoin the public uſe of it in churches, and require ſubſcription to the ſaid uſe from the ſaid paſtors, merely becauſe they judge, that a preſcribed form of prayer is eſſentially neceſſary to a civil eſtabliſhment in religion,—that the public worſhip cannot ſubſiſt without it,—and that they are juſtified in forming ſuch an eſtabliſhment, notwithſtanding Chriſt has neither directly nor indirectly authorized the civil magiſtrate to interfere with his religious province.

Chriſt I regard as the ſole head under God in ſpiritual matters, as, in civil concerns, I glory in acknowledging no other ſupre-

ſupremacy, than that of king, *temporal* Lords and Commons;—and ſincerely wiſh, that ſuch beings, as Lords ſpiritual, were excluded from the participation of one of the branches of that ſupremacy;—a ſupremacy delegated by the people, in virtue of a delegated power from God, of conſtituting that form of civil government, which they think moſt likely to anſwer the end propoſed, namely, the good of the community;—a ſupremacy, wherein, as the king acts, conjointly with the two houſes of parliament, in all legiſlative affairs, ſo is he alſo inveſted with the ſole executive power;—a ſupremacy, whereby the three eſtates of the realm were deſigned to unite together, in conſulting the welfare of their conſtituents, the people,—and, particularly, not to diſregard their earneſt remonſtrances againſt a precipitate engagement in, and a pertinacious proſecution of, needleſs, diſhonourable, and ruinous, wars.

I neither affirm, nor deny, that we labour under this great national evil at preſent;—but this I affirm, that the people, as all government is the creature of man, or originates in the gift of the people, are

poſſeſt of a power inherent in them to ſtrengthen their political conſtitution with additional ſecurities, or to entirely new-model it, when, inſtead of being beneficially employed in their protection, it be ſyſtematically abuſed to their deſtruction;—*ſyſtematically*, I ſay;—for the people are bound to exerciſe the ſocial virtues of charity, long-ſuffering, and forgiveneſs, towards the miniſters, or ſervants, of the public,—who, though men of acknowledged political abilities, yet, as error is the lot of humanity, may caſually err,—but will, if they purſue not a ſettled ſyſtem of politics calculated to enſlave a nation, rejoice to rectify abuſes in government, when clearly pointed out to the governors by the governed. The governed indeed are ſo deeply impreſt with a ſenſe of the bleſſings of a juſt and mild reign, that the hiſtory of our own country (not to inſiſt on the annals of foreign ſtates) informs us, they will bear, with much patience the grievous oppreſſions of deſpotic rulers. In ſhort, ſo much is power idolized by men of weak minds, that kings, or the miniſters of kings, in their name,

name, and inveſted with the exerciſe of their authority, are more forward to encroach upon popular right, than the people are to invade regal prerogative; — and they oftener rebel againſt their ſubjects, than their ſubjects againſt them.

This may be conſidered as a political digreſſion, *en paſſant*; — which I judged it incumbent on me to make, and thereby aſſert my ſocial liberty, as an human creature,—and, eſpecially, as a ſubject of a free government;---which, it is to be hoped, the nation will ever enjoy, under proteſtant princes of the illuſtrious houſe of Brunſwic,—whoſe proteſtant anceſtry owed their ſucceſſion to the throne of Great Britain to a deed of gift from the people,—who, to the inconteſtable proof of their wiſdom exhibited at that memorable and glorious æra, the revolution, added that of the act of ſettlement. As this act excluded a popiſh tyrant, and his real or ſuppoſititious iſſue, ſo alſo it placed the crown on the head of the elector of Hanover, and ſecured it to his deſcendants, *with the proviſo*, that they introduce not either popery or arbitrary power.

This deed of gift therefore is irrevocable, till ſuch time as a king from his loins ſhall ariſe (a ſore evil! which, God forbid, we ſhould ever experience) guilty of the atrocious wickedneſs and ingratitude of eſtabliſhing popery by law in any part of the Britiſh dominions, — or of attempting to exerciſe arbitrary power, either in a barefaced outrageous manner, or inſidiouſly, and more dangerouſly, by deſtroying the vital ſpirit, under colour of preſerving the external form of our political conſtitution.

I now reſume the continuation of my particular ſubject with obſerving, that, ſubſequently to the completion of the ſucceſſion of the preſent curates to parochial biſhoprics, the aforeſaid alternate academical ſeniority,—collegiate-teſtimonial, ſcriptural examination, — two-fold ſubſcription,—civil abjuration, or its ſubſtitute the aſſeveration,—(imprecatory oaths, wherein God is invoked, not only as a witneſs, but as an avenger, being unſcriptural) ought to be the ſole neceſſary terms of admiſſion to this parochial epiſcopacy,—a plan! which ſeems to be as little inimical to the revival of the principles and practice of genuine and primitive

primitive apoſtolic Chriſtianity, as any civil eſtabliſhment in religion can be.

A national eccleſiaſtical conſtitution, thus arranged, would be infinitely more eligible and evangelic, than the preſent church-ſyſtem, conſiſting of an unnatural mixture of religion and politics, whereby the ſame individual is at once a Chriſtian paſtor, and an Engliſh peer,—or, as he is uſually termed in the language of parliament, a ſpiritual lord.

Moreover, the advantageous effects of it, viewed in a political light, would be ſo ſoon and ſurprizingly viſible, that the nation would have abundant cauſe to rejoice at the happy change.

I recommend the requiſition of the ſolemn affirmation of the Quakers, from the parochial biſhops, in lieu of our imprecatory oath—Firſt, becauſe the former is ſtrictly conformable to the practice of the apoſtles; and, Secondly, becauſe it effectually and innocently anſwers the purpoſe of the latter. Paul's ſtrongeſt aſſeveration is, —'I call God for a record upon my ſoul', (2 Cor. 1. 23.) How different is this invocation of God, to atteſt the

truth of what he affirms to be true, from that imprecatory exclamation at the close of our oath,—'So help me God'! This virtually implies the imprecation, not less of a divine curse upon ourselves, if we break our oath, than of a divine blessing, if we fulfil it. Surely, the crime of perjury is sufficiently atrocious in itself, without the addition of the sin of beseeching God to avenge the guilt of it. A man, who dreads divine vengeance, would not presume to imprecate it upon, but wish to deprecate it from, himself. The intent of the oaths to the government is, to give verbal security for bearing true allegiance to our sovereign Lord, the King. The same is the intent of the solemn affirmation of the Quakers. Therefore, as their peaceable deportment is an incontestable proof, that his majesty is not blest with more loyal subjects among *swearing*, than *affirming*, Christians, — and, as bad men are not restrained within the limits of their duty, either by promises, or by oaths, but are merely bound down by the penalties annext to the breach of them; — I wish, that the solemn justifiable asseveration of

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the Quakers was univerſally injoined, in all caſes, among Chriſtians, in lieu of the preſent unwarrantable imprecatory oath.

Having now delivered my ſentiments on the evangelic unlawfulneſs of the latter, it will not be amiſs to ſuggeſt, I am well aware, that the annual ſtipend of two hundred pounds each, propoſed for the ſupport of the parochial paſtors, may be objected to, as particularly incompetent to the ſupply of the real wants of thoſe, whoſe paſtoral lot may fall in pariſhes ſituated in the capital, or its environs;—and as generally ineffectual to ſet the miniſters of the goſpel, in theſe expenſive times, at a becoming diſtance from the equally noxious extremes of affluence and indigence, being deſtructive of a due medium by its declination to the ſide of indigence.

The firſt part of the objection, that the ſaid ſtipend is particularly incompetent, might be obviated by aſſerting, that it is nearly impracticable to make a public regulation, beneficial in general, which ſhall equally apply to the particular caſe of every private individual. However, I propoſe to formally refute it by this valid argument,—

namely,

namely, that, in conſequence of a pernicious taſte for luxury and elegance pervading all ranks of men, unhappily diffuſed over every part of England, the finances, requiſite to ſupport what is arrogantly termed a ſplendid ſtile of living, are nearly upon a par at Carliſle and in London; the difference in this reſpect being little more than imaginary, or at leaſt not ſo materially conſiderable, as is uſually repreſented.

But, why ſhould the miniſters of the goſpel engage in that ridiculous faſhionable extravagance, which has proved the bankruptcy of many, and may be called a curſe, which they have been induſtrious to bring upon themſelves? On the contrary, it is certainly incumbent on them, to diſcourage it by their own perſonal temperance and œconomy.—If my parochial biſhops or paſtors be contented, as they ought to be, with food and raiment, with the means of procuring the enjoyment of the eſſential neceſſaries and conveniencies of life, they will find, they may be purchaſed at a nearly equal rate throughout England. It was lately intimated, in one of our public Diaries, which are unjuſtly cenſured as replete

plete with falſhood, that, through the infamous practice of corn-jobbing, bread was become as dear in a certain remote county, as in the metropolis.

In reſpect to that part of the objection, that the ſaid ſtipend would be generally incompetent, I frankly acknowledge, that, as the nation muſt be greatly benefited by the propoſed appropriation of the ſpoils of the church, namely, the immenſe ſum of money ariſing from the ſale of church-lands and church-tithes, and from every ſpecies of ſuppreſt church-revenue, to that ſingle moſt patriotic object, the immediate payment of the public debt; it would be but equitable and reaſonable, that my parochial paſtors ſhould be maintained by the more adequate public ſalary of three hundred pounds per annum each.

On the other hand, when it is conſidered, that the number of pariſhes throughout England and Wales may be eſtimated at eleven thouſand; — that, conſequently, they will call for a ſupply of eleven thouſand parochial paſtors;—(for I mean to include the principality of Wales in this reformed church-eſtabliſhment) that the ſup-

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port of eleven thouſand paſtors, at the annual ſtipendiary proviſion of two hundred pounds each, will require the annual expenditure of two millions, and two hundred thouſand pounds;—and that the public will be on this reformed plan, burthened, for a time limited, with the additional, though gradually decreaſing, charge of penſioning for life the preſent Lords ſpiritual, the ſubordinate dignitaries, and all other eccleſiaſtics poſſeſſing ſine-cure preferment, to the extent of their ſuppreſt church-revenues, together with thoſe of the preſent beneficed parochial clergy, to the full amount of that ſurplus of two hundred pounds, which their reſpective parochial benefices annually produced, previouſly to the propoſed converſion of them into parochial biſhoprics,—and the preſent race of curates, to the amount of an hundred pounds per annum each, till their order be extinct in an univerſal appointment of them to vacant parochial biſhoprics; — when theſe ſeveral points are duly weighed, I ceaſe urging the neceſſity of allotting a ſtipend exceeding two hundred pounds per annum each to parochial paſtors, at leaſt till ſuch

time

time as theſe extra-charges to the public ſhall ceaſe.

In the interim, a great majority of the clergy, myſelf included, will have cauſe to rejoice, and thank the legiſlature and the public for a ſtipendiary proviſion of two hundred pounds per annum each ;—a ſum, which exceeds the reſpective incomes of their preſent benefices,—and, if equally allotted to all, would annihilate the ſhameful diſproportion of church-poſſeſſions and church-ſervices, which now prevails.

To thoſe parochial biſhops or paſtors, who are married men, burthened with numerous families, this annual church-income may be indeed the more incompetent, in caſe they be deſtitute of a private fortune. But this being merely an adventitious circumſtance, it ought to be endured without repining, as it could not be remedied, but by an act of parliament, granting peculiar immunities and privileges to all ranks of men ſo circumſtanced, without exception, in imitation of the *jus trium liberorum* of the Romans ;—a meaſure, evidently well-calculated to encourage matri-

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mony and population, which are the eſſential glory and ſtrength of every nation.

It may farther be objected, that, by this equality of ſalary, no proviſion would be made for the reward of men of diſtinguiſhed merit. It is true. But ſuch men ought to regard the extraordinary degree of eſteem, love, and reſpect, they will acquire among the conſcientious part of their pariſhioners, by ſuperior moral worth, or mental ability, reward ſufficient. Beſides, as rewards are ſeldom impartially diſtributed, a proſpect of an advanced church-revenue would be but a temptation to purſue unmanly and unchriſtian meaſures to gain it,—and prove an incentive to worldly ambition,—a lure! from which the miniſters of God's word ſhould be altogether exempt.

Having obviated the ſeveral objections, which might be advanced againſt the competency, and equality, of the propoſed ſtipendiary maintenance of the parochial paſtors, I proceed with obſerving, that the ſuppreſſion of the ſpiritual court, propoſed in the preceding plan of church-reformation, which is at all times neceſſary, would be, at this juncture, particularly well-

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timed; — becauſe this court, unlike the common-law-courts, which are a terror to the evil man, is the miniſter of evil to the good man, being now actually employed, as I before hinted, in the baneful exerciſe of its uſurped authority over the conſciences of men, againſt a valuable clergyman in Glouceſterſhire; — as tho' a man were not poſſeſt of a natural and revealed right to declare his ſentiments, that 'Jeſus is the ſon of Joſeph,' (an aſſertion warranted by Luke iv. 22; and John i. 45, and vi. 42.) with an impunity equal to that, with which the teachers of the tabernacle aſſert, that '*Jeſus is the ſelf-exiſtent Jehovah*', — an expreſſion! which occurs not, if I read aright, in any one paſſage either of the old, or new, Teſtament. I would not be underſtood to inſinuate, that the Evangeliſts, in the afore-cited paſſages, meaned to ſay, that Jeſus was the real ſon of Joſeph: on the contrary, I think, that by the expreſſion they only intimated, that he was ſo ſuppoſed to be, and ſo called by the Jews. I ground my opinion on that prophecy in Jeremiah, xxxi. 22. 'The Lord hath created a new thing in the earth: — a woman

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ſhall compaſs a man.' This to me ſeems to relate to the miraculous birth of Chriſt, 'born of a woman,' without the previous carnal knowledge of a man. The divine prophecies delivered to the Jews, thoſe ſcriptures, which are expreſsly ſaid to 'teſtify of Chriſt,'—and to which the Evangeliſts and Apoſtles refer, and direct their hearers to ſearch, for the truth of their doctrine, are my ſole guides in all things reſpecting the perſon, office, and character of Chriſt. They are the clue, which will lead me ſafe through the otherwiſe intricate labyrinth of Chriſtian knowledge: they are the criterion, which enables me to diſtinguiſh betwixt genuine and ſpurious goſpels: they are the touchſtone, whereby to ſeparate the pure metal from the baſe alloy,—the true word of God from the falſe doctrine of man. But, though ſuch be my ſentiments, and ſo founded, concerning the true ſignification of the expreſſion, 'Jeſus, the ſon of Joſeph,'—yet I entirely diſapprove of the eccleſiaſtical tyranny of harraſſing a man with ſpiritual, or rather, anti-chriſtian, law-ſuits, becauſe he differs from me in opinion, or

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may, with an apoſtolic boldneſs and ſincerity, unequivocally aſſert, that, in his judgment, Jeſus is the real ſon of Joſeph. It really would not be more abſurd, though the world be little accuſtomed to think ſo, to proſecute a man, on account of the perfect non-reſemblance betwixt his black, and my fair, complexion of body, as on account of an eſſential difference, which may ſubſiſt betwixt our reſpective turns of mind, and trains of thought. It would be but a juſt judgment on thoſe, (though a man of Chriſtian charity would not wiſh they ſhould experience it) who *love* proſecution, to *periſh* by proſecution. It is much to be lamented, that, in the year of our Lord, 1775, at the diſtance of two centuries from the reformation, when my countrymen might be ſuppoſed to be greatly improved, as well in Chriſtian practice, as knowledge, there ſhould be found among them men, who, no doubt, ſtile themſelves Proteſtant Chriſtians, ſo very ignorant of the meek and peaceable ſpirit of their maſter Chriſt, and of his religion, whoſe grand characteriſtic is charity, or love, as to think of ſerving God and Chriſt,

and to attempt to propagate their goſpel, by compulſive means;—Means! ſimilar to that forcible expedient of the ſword, which the impoſtor, Mohammed, adopted in the diffuſion of his ſuperſtition, formed out of an unnatural jumble of Paganiſm, Judaiſm, and Chriſtianity; — means! reſembling thoſe which the great mother of idolatrous abominations, 'drunk with the blood of the ſaints,' ſtill practically recommends by her inquiſitorial tortures:—means! totally repugnant to thoſe rational arguments of mild and benevolent perſuaſion, with which Chriſt and his apoſtles inculcated their divine doctrine, 'glory to God in the higheſt, and on earth peace; good-will towards men,' and which every *good* man, whether he be a clergyman, or a layman, and, I may add, whether he be denominated a Chriſtian, a Muſſulman, or an Heathen, would wiſh to apply, in perſuading men, inflamed with an intemperate and miſtaken zeal, to relax from that bigotry to their own religious opinions, which urges them to become inſtrumental in reviving, with a rage reſembling papal, againſt a man, who diſſents from them, the furious ſpirit of

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Hell-born perſecution: Hell-born! I repeat; for who, but the Devil, can be the father of the monſter? Let then the accuſers of the aforeſaid clergyman reflect, that to the perpetration of murther, diſguiſed under the ſpecious name of wholſome religious ſeverity, the indulgence of their *ſpiritual* wrath might have hurried them, if they had lived in an age, when, armed with the civil power, they might have roaſted thoſe, whom they were pleaſed to term Heretics, with impunity. — Men, whoſe heads are diſordered with incomprehenſible ſyſtems of faith, and whoſe hearts are uninfluenced by that engaging evangelic principle of action, charity, eaſily work themſelves up to ſuch a pitch of phrenzy, as to 'think, that, in killing' thoſe, whoſe faith may not exceed in quantity 'a grain of muſtard-ſeed, they do God ſervice.' — A man of the moſt extenſive chriſtian philanthropy, would, with difficulty, refrain from ſuſpecting, that the orthodox-parſon, at leaſt ſo ſtiled, who, after reading a word or two in an heterodox-pamphlet, which had been given him, ſeized, with a countenance red with uncommon wrath, a red-

hot poker, and applied it to its contents, would have been conſenting to the ſimilar death of its author, if they had both lived in the times of bloody Mary, and her popiſh miniſtry.—I relate the above as a matter of fact, whereof I was, to my great grief, an eye-witneſs, and which made ſo deep an impreſſion on my mind at the time, that it cannot be eaſily eraſed from my memory. Let the aforeſaid ſpiritual oppreſſors farther conſider, that, by their uncharitable proceſs in the ſpiritual court, they preſumptuouſly wreſt from God the exerciſe of his excluſive prerogative, who has declared, that to him alone juſtice and vengeance belong for religious offences committed againſt him, and has expreſsly charged them, to 'judge nothing before the time,' before that great awful day, when as well the ſpiritual plaintiffs, as the defendant, muſt appear before the judgment-ſeat of Chriſt, 'that man, whom God hath ordained to judge the world.' From him if they ſhould 'receive judgment without mercy,' they cannot with a ſhadow of juſtice complain, as they have 'ſhewed no mercy', in the proſecution of a fellow-

chriſtian

chriſtian for a fault, which did not properly come under their cognizance,—and for the commiſſion whereof, on the ſuppoſition, that it was a fault in him, which I do not allow, he is amenable only to the future divine tribunal of Chriſt.

But, perhaps, they may offer an apology for their unremitting proſecution, by alledging, that the main article, contained in their charge againſt the clerical culprit, is his omiſſion of a part of the Nicene creed. This plea would be totally inadmiſſible; — for, not to repeat, that proſecution, in religious caſes, is indefenſible on the ſcore of goſpel-precept, ſelf-evident is the propoſition, that it would be more conducive to national welfare, conſidered both in a religious and civil point of view, that the eſtabliſhed liturgy ſhould be aboliſhed, than that a ſingle miniſter of the goſpel ſhould be oppreſt, on account of non-conformity to it, eſpecially, in its nonſenſical metaphyſical points.

In reſpect to myſelf, I frankly and boldly declare, that, even in the preſent ſtate of things, it is my intention, *dum vivo et valeo*, that my tongue ſhall be free to utter,

from the pulpit, and my pen to write from the preſs, my ſentiments on every religious point. In theſe inſtances, I propoſe to exerciſe my Chriſtian liberty, in deſpight of conſequences; which, however they may prove deſtructive of my temporal intereſt, cannot but be eventually inſtrumental to my eternal welfare. With hopes therefore full of immortality, and of the glorious recompence of reward, happineſs everlaſting, I am at preſent determined, if it pleaſe God, that I ſhould be ſummoned before the ſaid tribunal of anti-Chriſt, in conſequence of this my project of a complete amendment of our eccleſiaſtical conſtitution, not to retain an advocate, but to plead in perſon my own cauſe. In this caſe, it is my deſign to give the court very little trouble, by denying, in unequivocal, but reſpectful, terms, that human courts of judicature are authorized to extend their cognizance to matters merely religious, which are amenable only to the judgment of a divine tribunal.

The proſecutors, or perſecutors, of the eccleſiaſtic before alluded to, are particularly unfortunate in aiming their envenom-

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ed ſhafts at him; — as I know not a man more eſteemed in private life, for a good moral character in general, and for Chriſtian benevolence in particular. In reſpect to his literary attainments and abilities, both in his publications from the preſs, and in his correſpondence and converſation, the advantages whereof I occaſionally enjoy, he appears to me in the light of an 'Apollos, mighty in the ſcriptures', — endued with conſummate critical ſkill in the ſacred writings of the prophets and apoſtles. I imagine, he has overlooked, or not ſufficiently attended to, the prophecy above quoted by me, which ſeems to militate againſt his opinion, that Jeſus is the real ſon of Joſeph. — But, being diſpoſed to embrace truth, wherever I find it, if he can demonſtrate, in a manner ſatisfactory to me, that the paſſage in Jeremiah does not refer to the miraculous birth of the Meſſiah, I ſhall not be aſhamed to change my preſent opinion to the contrary. The mind of an unprejudiced friend to truth, and an enemy to every human ſyſtem of divine faith, is ever open to conviction. I candidly acknowledge, that my friend can

alledge remote Chriſtian antiquity in ſupport of his tenet;—for the Ebionites, who held the ſame opinion, flouriſhed, to the beſt of my recollection of eccleſiaſtical hiſtory, before the end of the firſt century. Theſe Chriſtians are ſuppoſed by the juſtly-celebrated Dr. Lardner, 'in his Jewiſh and heathen teſtimonies to the truth of the Chriſtian religion,' to be the deſcendants of Jewiſh converts; and, conſequently, may be ſuppoſed to have ſtudied the ſcriptures of the old Teſtament, with a more than ordinary attention. His tenet may farther ſeem to be favoured by that prophecy of Moſes (Deut. xviii. 15) 'The Lord thy God will raiſe up unto thee a prophet, from the midſt of thee, *of thy brethren*, like unto me.' In the fourth century, the emperor Julian, in his work againſt the Chriſtians, cited by the ſaid Dr. Lardner from Cyril's anſwer to it, has the following remark on this prophecy;—'*This cannot be ſpoken concerning the ſon of Mary*'.—I am ſenſible, this remark of Julian has been treated by Chriſtians rather as an impertinent cavil, than a juſt obſervation;—but it cannot be conſidered in the former light,

light, if, by the expreſſion, '*of thy brethren*', it be meant, that this future prophet, Jeſus Chriſt, ſhould be the offspring, as well of a man, as of a woman. In ſhort the controverſy may be brought within a very narrow compaſs. If the prophecy in Jeremiah bear a reference to the miraculous birth of Chriſt, which is my opinion, then the expreſſion, '*of thy brethren*,' muſt be taken in a more diffuſe and lax ſenſe, as implying, that Jeſus was to be deſcended by Mary from Jewiſh brethren; if not, then it is to be underſtood in the former ſtrict literal ſenſe. But, in fact, the truth of the divine diſpenſation of ſalvation to man, through the mediation, or miniſtry, of Jeſus Chriſt, reſts on the united inconteſtable evidence of prophecies and miracles, and is not, in the leaſt, dependent on, or connected with, the ſolution of the queſtion,—Whether Chriſt be the ſon of Joſeph and Mary, or the ſeed of the woman only? which appears, in my judgment, to be the meaning of the promiſe to Adam. I only wiſh, that when divines ſpeak of the miraculous conception, they would avoid uſing the epithet *immaculate*.

immaculate. The conception of Mary was indiſputably immaculate;—but by appropriating the epithet ſolely to the miraculous conception, they indirectly, though unintentionally, convey an idea, that the ordinary matrimonial conception is *maculate*; — a point! which the advocates (among whom I claſs myſelf) for that divine primitive inſtitution of marriage, the original of ſo many endearing bleſſings to mankind, cannot allow. Chriſt is ſtiled the ſon of God in the new Teſtament, as being particularly favoured by God with the intereſting commiſſion of preaching peace to mankind, and as being declared to be the ſon of God with power, by the reſurrection from the dead; — but, in this diſquiſition, into which I have entered farther than I at firſt intended, I have purpoſely omitted that paſſage in Luke, wherein Chriſt is called 'the ſon of God,' on account of his miraculous birth;—becauſe I derive my ſentiments of the generation of Chriſt from a compariſon of the event with the prophecies of the old Teſtament concerning it,—and am apprehenſive, that the contending Chriſtian platoniſts of Alexandria

dria may have, in early days, corrupted goſpels and epiſtles, for the purpoſe of ſupporting their reſpective fanciful metaphyſical opinions. It is a clear point too, that the fathers of the church, as they are unſcripturally ſtiled, would not ſcruple to lie *for* the truth, if they would not lie *againſt* it. Hence, in the courſe of my diſpaſſionate reſearches into goſpel-truth, I have collected not leſs genuine teſtimony to the authenticity of the Chriſtian religion from Celſus, Porphyry and Julian, its profeſſed enemies, though undeſigned by them, than from thoſe its weak friends; and *fas eſt et ab hoſte doceri*, is a maxim univerſally admitted and practiſed. They certainly did great diſſervice to the cauſe of Chriſtianity, and injudiciouſly laid themſelves open to the cavils of this heathen emperor, by their '*lying wonders*,' which they firſt forged, and then appealed to them as vouchers of the truth of the goſpel. One of the fathers, named Gregory, acquired the additional appellative of Thaumaturgus, on account of his notorious ſkill in the practice of the art of pious juggling. The ſhrewd Julian detected, and expoſed their impoſ-

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tures, and on them founded his plauſible, but groundleſs, objections to Chriſtian truth itſelf. Irritated, beyond all Chriſtian patience, by the dexterous thruſts of their adverſary, and mortified at their inability to parry them, they have, in an unchriſtian manner, loaded his memory with greater obloquy and reproach than it really deſerved, unmindful of the equitable and charitable proverb,—'give even the devil his due.' '*Non tali auxilio, non defenſoribus iſtis*,' *Chriſtus* '*eget*.'—Julian brings this accuſation in particular againſt them;—'you are ſo unhappy, as not to adhere to the things delivered to you by the apoſtles:—but they have been altered by you for the worſe:—for neither Paul, nor Matthew, nor Luke, nor Mark, have dared to call Jeſus God. Moſes taught the worſhip of one God only;—he never teacheth any other ſecond God, as you do.'—He alſo with great freedom, but with much juſtice, brings other articles of accuſation againſt the Chriſtians of his time;—'you worſhip,' ſays he, 'the wood of the croſs, make ſigns of it on your foreheads, and fix it on your doors;

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you are continually calling Mary, mother of God.' — In his epiſtle to the people of Boſtra he aſſerts, 'becauſe they,' meaning the Chriſtians, 'have now no longer power to tyrannize over any, nor to practiſe their uſual violences upon one another, they are become furious', — and, towards the cloſe of the epiſtle, he reprehends them as men, 'who betake themſelves to dead men, and their relicks.'

The Chriſtians could not acquit themſelves of theſe ſeveral heavy charges;—and therefore, like men who are worſted in argument, had recourſe to illiberal invective, and abuſe of the apoſtate emperor;—who, though addicted to the whole train of gentile ſuperſtitions, and to haruſpical divination in particular, eſtabliſhed, to the indelible reproach of Chriſtian kings, an unlimited and univerſal toleration in religious ſentiments and practice throughout his empire.

I intimated above, that the proſecution of my learned friend, ſo hoſtile to the introduction of a ſimilar toleration in all Chriſtian countries, a right, which God has given, and, conſequently, no man, or

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ſet of men, is authorized to take away, might be partly founded on a declaration, that Jeſus was the real ſon of Joſeph. — I had my reaſons at that time for thinking ſo;—but, in a late interview with him, he has rectified my miſapprehenſion, and informed me, that the proſecution was grounded on the free delivery of his ſentiments on another ſuppoſed point of faith.

I have alſo, ſince I acceded, in a preceding page, to the opinion, that Jeſus was not the ſon of Joſeph, converſed with an ingenious clergyman, (whether he be my proſecuted friend, or not, I am not authorized to declare) whoſe argument, in favour of the opinion, that Jeſus was the real ſon of Joſeph, carries, in my judgment, ſo much weight with it, that I now incline to his opinion;—but have thought proper not to with-hold my former ſentiments from the preſs, that the public may enjoy the benefit of examining the ſtate of the arguments *pro* and *con*, on this ſpeculative point. His argument is, that if the afore-cited paſſage in Jeremiah,—'a woman ſhall compaſs a man,'—referred to the future miraculous birth of Chriſt, the Meſſiah

Meſſiah would have been expreſsly named in that prophecy, as he is under the title of 'a prophet, like unto Moſes,' in Deuteronomy. He therefore thinks, that, as there is not a word mentioned of this great prophet in this text of Jeremiah, or in the context, it may perhaps point to the event of queen Eſther obtaining her important ſuit from king Ahaſuerus; in conſequence whereof her countrymen, the Jews, were delivered from that general exterminating maſſacre, throughout the twenty-ſeven provinces of the wide-extended Perſian empire, which the wicked Haman had deviſed againſt them.

A woman ſurely may well be ſaid to compaſs a man, when ſhe had intereſt ſufficient to procure from her royal conſort the grant of this intereſting national petition, whereon depended not merely the well-being, but the very exiſtence, of the Jewiſh people.—It might be called 'the creation of a new thing in the earth,' becauſe it was unuſual for women to interfere in public affairs.

But, whatever be the genuine meaning of this prophecy, it does not appear to me

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ſufficiently explicit, to authorize an application of it to the ſuppoſed miraculous birth of Chriſt. If 'the Lord our righteouſneſs, that glorious branch from the ſtem of Jeſſe, the' great 'ſon of David,' had deſcended from his loins by the mother's ſide only, and had not been generated by an human father, I firmly believe, this extraordinary regulation of his future birth would have been preſignified, in expreſs terms, by God, to the Jewiſh prophets. But it may be objected,—is it not plainly revealed in Iſaiah vii. 14. 'A virgin ſhall conceive, and bear a ſon, and ſhall call his name Immanuel?'—We muſt not be too haſty in applying this prediction to the merely maternal birth of Chriſt;—for, in the firſt place, the Hebrew word עלמה, means any young woman;—and, ſecondly, if we examine the context, we ſhall find it points at a totally-different event, to be fulfilled in the reign of Ahaz, king of Judah, when Iſaiah prophefied, and not long after the delivery of the prophecy;—'the 'Lord himſelf ſhall give you a ſign,—be-'hold! a virgin' (or a young woman) 'ſhall 'conceive, and bear a ſon, and ſhall call his

'name

'name Immanuel. Butter and honey ſhall 'be eat, that he may know to refuſe the 'evil, and to chooſe the good;—for before 'the child ſhall know to refuſe the evil, and 'to chooſe the good, the land, that thou 'abhorreſt, ſhall be forſaken of both her 'kings', namely, Rezin king of Syria, and Poſtah king of Iſrael;—who, we are informed in the firſt verſe of the ſame chapter, 'went up towards Jeruſalem to war againſt it, but could not prevail againſt it'. Accordingly, we learn from 2 Kings xvi. 9. that Tiglath-Pileſer, king of Aſſyria, at the intreaty of Ahaz, 'went up againſt Damaſcus, took it, and ſlew Rezin;'—as in 2 Kings xv. 10, we are told, that 'Hoſhea made a conſpiracy againſt Pekah, and ſlew him.' The compiler indeed of the goſpel, denominated Matthew's, applies this prophecy to the event of the ſuppoſed miraculous nativity of Jeſus; but with what ſemblance of truth this faithful repreſentation of the event, to which it evidently refers, is ſufficient to determine;—and, if an angel from heaven preach any other goſpel than that, which is foretold by the divinely inſpired prophets in the old

Teſtament, or fix on their predictions a different interpretation from that, which they will, without manifeſt perverſion, bear, I am bound to reject him as an impoſtor.

Impelled by the pure love of goſpel-truth in its native uncorruptneſs, I cannot avoid diſcloſing my ſuſpicions, that, as an interpolation has been detected in 1 John v. 7, ſo ſpurious goſpels and epiſtles may have been obtruded on the world, and thoſe, which were genuine, corrupted, in the firſt ages of the chriſtian æra, and, in all human probability, by the chriſtian platoniſts of the ſchool of Alexandria, officiouſly, and perniciouſly, intermixing their 'vain philoſophy,' or jangling ſophiſtry, with the ſimplicity of genuine chriſtianity. Hence Matthew is made to ſay in the laſt verſe of his firſt chaper, that 'Joſeph knew her not', (Mary) 'till ſhe had brought forth her firſt-born ſon,' Jeſus; and, conſequently, to contradict Luke and John, who expreſsly affirm, that 'Jeſus is the ſon of Joſeph.'

However, my ſuſpicions, whether well or ill-founded, have produced, by the bleſſing of God, a very deſirable effect on my mind, as they have led me to 'ſearch the ſcripture',

ſcriptures', the prophecies of the old Teſtament, to which my inſtrumental ſaviour, and his apoſtles, refer me for the truth of their doctrine; and, conſequently, if, upon a diligent ſelf-enquiry into the prophecies, I cannot find the miraculous birth of Chriſt foretold, I do not heſitate to reject it as a fanciful metaphyſical hypotheſis; — and both think, and hope, that my conduct herein will be approved by Chriſt, my future divinely-delegated judge.

Let other theologians amuſe, or perplex, themſelves with reconciling contradictions, and harmonizing diſcordances; — I chooſe rather to embrace the only infallible expedient of coming to the knowledge of 'the truth, as it is in Jeſus,' by ſearching the antient divine prophecies, 'whether things are ſo,' like Paul's impartial converts of Bercœa. I am not 'ſlow of heart to believe all, which the prophets have ſpoken' concerning Chriſt.—He, after his reſurrection, joins two of his diſciples in their walk to Emmaus, and thus interrogates them,—'ought not Chriſt to have ſuffered theſe things, and to enter into his glory?'—appealing herein to the teſtimony of the

prophecies, delivered under the old covenant of the law, for the truth of his future ſufferings unto death, — his reſurrection, — and ſubſequent entrance into his ſtate of glory, or reward, under the new covenant of grace. — On examining theſe prophecies, I find this queſtion put to his diſciples reſolved in the affirmative, and therefore give credit to theſe particulars concerning Chriſt. But when I am informed, that the man, Chriſt Jeſus, was not begotten by an human father, but ſupernaturally born of an human mother, I diſbelieve this circumſtance as a fiction, becauſe I do not find it predicted in the aforeſaid prophecies. In ſhort, to repeat what in effect I urged before, the divine prophecies of the old Teſtament are my ſole irrefragable vouchers of the truth of the events of the new.

John, in the Apocalypſe, juſtly obſerves, 'that the teſtimony of Jeſus is the ſpirit of prophecy.' Miracles indeed, 'the' wonderful 'works,' which our Lord did, 'bear witneſs of him, that the Father had ſent him,'

— or

— or were undoubted proofs of his divine commiſſion, to thoſe, who beheld them; but we, who ſaw them not, can produce no other authentic divine evidence of the truth of chriſtianity, than that, which reſults from the all-ſufficient teſtimony of prophecy; which, ſuperadded to the perfect harmony of the excellent moral precepts of the goſpel with the dictates of the human underſtanding, eſtabliſhed the credibility of apoſtolic teſtimony to the certainty of Chriſt's reſurrection, beyond the poſſibility of a doubt.

As I propoſe, in ſome future publication, to expatiate ſtill farther on the ſubject of the nativity of Chriſt; I ſhall cloſe the preceding remarks with this one obſervation, viz. that the promiſe recorded in Geneſis, on a review of it, ſeems to imply nothing more, than that a man 'ſhall bruiſe the ſerpent's head;' and that the expreſſion, 'the ſeed of the woman,' is not ſufficient to juſtify the hypotheſis of the miraculous birth of Chriſt produced from Mary, without the previous carnal knowledge of her huſband Joſeph.

Having now given my public teſtimony to *proſecuted merit*, and freely ſuperadded my ſentiments on that ſpeculative point, which I erroneouſly deemed one of the grounds of the *ſpiritual accuſation* againſt my learned friend, I re-enter on my plan of church-reformation, and declare I mean to be underſtood, that the aforeſaid reformed national conſtitution in church might be enjoined, and ſubmitted to, till ſuch time as the civil magiſtrate, that is, the King, Lords, and Commons, can clearly diſcern, that they are not empowered by Chriſt to invade his ſpiritual province, or to interfere at all with the management of matters merely religious, or which concern only God, and a man's own conſcience; for, in civil concerns, men are amenable to an human tribunal; and, in religious affairs, to a divine judicature alone.

God has not commiſſioned Chriſt to give, nor has Chriſt given, a preſcribed form of prayer;—what is called the Lord's Prayer, containing only the general heads, (and an excellent ſummary of petitions it is) by which every chriſtian individual is in duty bound to regulate the ſubject-matter of his prayers,

prayers,—to regard it as a complete ſtandard and model of prayer, — and, having theſe general heads conſtantly before his eyes, as the ground-work of his addreſſes to God, to particularize from them, according as he ſhall find occaſion in the various occurrences of life. Conſequently, in fact, the civil power cannot be juſtified in exacting either the uſe, or ſubſcription to the uſe, of a liturgy; — much leſs, ſubſcription to the truth of its contents: —— For, to infer from the ſilence of Chriſt on this head an authority to enjoin them, is to be wiſe above what is written; virtually to acknowledge, that Chriſt left his religion imperfect; and to purſue a ſpecies of conduct greatly reſembling that 'dominion over the faith' of men, which even the inſpired apoſtle Paul expreſsly diſclaims. —— The civil magiſtrate then ought to leave, and would act wiſely in leaving, every man at full liberty to 'worſhip God in ſpirit and in truth,' with or without a form, and in private by himſelf, or in public with his neighbours; and on this, that, or every, day, according as his own judgment and experience ſhould convince him to be moſt

conducive to his own improvement in chriſtian knowledge and practice.

But the time ſeems not yet to be arrived, for the nation at large, and either the clergy, or the legiſlature, in particular, to perceive the evangelic unlawfulneſs of impoſing even the uſe of a Liturgy. — Parliament therefore would not be guilty of a crime, if it were, only for the preſent, to take off ſubſcription to the articles, and to alter the mode of ſubſcription to the liturgy, in its preſent, or in a reformed, ſtate,—namely, to ſubſtitute a ſubſcription to *the ſole public uſe, or peruſal of its contents,* inſtead of a ſubſcription to the *truth* of them; which is now unhappily the caſe, and makes the legiſlature obnoxious to the charge of putting a fallible compoſition of men upon an equality with the unerring word of God.

As the immerſion of Chriſtians in the filth of popery was gradual, ſo alſo their emerſion from it muſt be progreſſive. The reſtoration of pure and primitive Chriſtianity is not the work of a day. 'Rome,' according to the old adage, 'was not built 'in a day;'—neither Rome pagan, nor

Rome

Rome papal. In like manner, this laſt cannot be deſtroyed in a day. However, the friends to Chriſtian truth and liberty, in every European country, may, and ought to, concert and execute meaſures, from day to day, for obtaining a complete victory over the whore of Babylon, (the church of Rome) who, in the Apocalypſe, is figuratively repreſented as riding on the beaſt (uſurping the civil power) who will, however, at laſt throw his rider, and trample her under foot; the very kingdoms, which have ſo long kept her firm in the ſaddle, having now eſſayed, by the expulſion of the Jeſuits, the ſtrenuous ſupporters of her anti-Chriſtian dominion in theſe later ages, to ſhake her from her ſeat, and treated their mother, the grand miſtreſs of idolatrous abominations, with no very filial reſpect. (N. B. It concerns thoſe lovers of myſtery, the Athanaſians, ſeriouſly to conſider, that the 'name written on the 'forehead' of this arch-harlot, 'was 'MYSTERY)'. See Revel. xvii. 5.

But, while we rejoice at this cheering proſpect of emancipation from the papal yoke abroad, let England, the bulwark of the

the reformation, proceed, after a too long inactive interval of two centuries, in completing the work, which ſhe has ſo happily begun, and in making the firſt advances towards a completion, by perſiſting in a righteous attempt to procure an act of parliament, to aboliſh ſubſcription to the thirty-nine articles, and liturgy; the impoſal of this ſubſcription on any claſs of men, being an unjuſtifiable exertion of an uſurped anti-chriſtian dominion over the hearts and conſciences of thoſe men,—for no ſuch dominion can be exerciſed, but upon the ſlaviſh intolerant principles of popery.

By the plan propoſed above, our conſtitution in ſtate would not only not be invaded and injured, but it would be additionally ſecured, and eventually improved;—a conſtitution! admirably adapted to the character and genius of our nation, ever wiſely partial to a limited monarchy, which our anceſtry repeatedly experienced to be diffuſive of national bleſſings;—and ſo will their poſterity, if they be a moral people, 'zealous of good works:'—but, when they ceaſe to be ſuch, they cannot be a free people: for, 'where 'the ſpirit of the Lord is, there' alone 'is 'liberty.'

' liberty.' Immorality, tyranny, and ſlavery are an inſeparable triumvirate; and not the beſt-framed polity on earth, nor even a theocracy, a civil conſtitution ſent us expreſs from heaven, as was that of the Jews, can ſecure to us our liberty and property, if we be a depraved, diſſipated, deceitful, and luſtful people, and love not God, and one another.

Whether ſelfiſhneſs, that vicious ſelf-love, maſked under the deceitful veil of ſelf-preſervation, which is confined to the ſingle ſordid object of worldly ſelf-aggrandizement, that luſt of temporal power, wealth, and grandeur, which excludes the love of the brotherhood, as fellow-chriſtians, and the love of our country, as fellow-Britons, be not a diſtinguiſhing characteriſtic of the preſent age, is a ſerious and important queſtion, whereon, though thinking men be at liberty to diſcuſs it in their own minds, it would be arrogantly cenſorious in me to decide in the affirmative. This, however, I think myſelf juſtified in aſſerting, that our ſelf-corruption in the love of the world, and of the fleſh, is not ſo inconſiderable, as to preclude the neceſſity of expreſſing a cordial

cordial wiſh, that the kingdom of Chriſt, governed by the eternal immutable laws of godlineſs, righteouſneſs, and temperance, may be extended throughout the earth. In him we ſhall ſee a patriot-king, whoſe throne will be eſtabliſhed in that charity, which, among its other excellent properties deſcribed by the apoſtle, 'ſeeketh not 'her own.' Then men, not 'living to 'themſelves alone,' will be happy rivals in the practice of that precept of the apoſtle, 'let no man ſeek his own, but every man 'another's wealth,' or welfare, — and be convinced, that a mutual tender attention to mutual happineſs is an efficacious advancement of true ſelf-intereſt, by an expedient the moſt pleaſing and agreeable. Under his mild peaceable reign, 'nation 'will not lift up ſword againſt nation, nei-'ther ſhall they learn war any more,' — much leſs, be engaged in unnatural inteſtine wars, wherein kindred-blood is ſpilt, and that crime moſt offenſive in the ſight of God, national ſelf-murther, is wantonly committed. As the hearts of his willing and obedient ſubjects will not be tempted to harbour a thought of diſloyalty, or rebellion;

bellion ;—ſo alſo the *crimen læſæ majeſtatis* will not be induſtriouſly ſought for. Then ſhall be brought to paſs that ſignal prophecy promulgated by Daniel, — ‘ the ſtone, ‘ that ſmote the image, became a great ‘ mountain, and filled the whole earth.’ God had revealed to king Nebuchadnezzar in a dream, which he empowered Daniel to interpret, the ſucceſſion of the four great monarchies, viz. the Aſſyrian (Nebuchadnezzar's empire), the Perſian, the Grecian, and the Roman, and of the ten ſubſequent kingdoms, into which the laſt was to be divided. Theſe great events were preſignified under the ſimilitude of a great image, whoſe ‘ head was of fine gold, his breaſt ‘ and his arms of ſilver, his belly and his ‘ ſides of braſs, his legs of iron, his feet ‘ part of iron and part of clay.’ Theſe four metals correſponded to the reſpective excellence and ſtrength of the four empires; and the mixture of iron and clay in the feet and ten toes denotes, that the ten kingdoms ſhould ‘ be partly ſtrong, and ‘ partly brittle.’ ‘ The ſtone,’ which is repreſented as ‘ cut out, without hands, ‘ ſmote the image upon his feet, and brake ‘ them

'them to pieces.' This ſtone is juſtly conſidered as an emblem of the univerſal ſpiritual kingdom of the Meſſiah, which is thus deſcribed;—'in the days of theſe kings (the kings of the ten kingdoms) 'ſhall 'the God of heaven ſet up a kingdom, 'which ſhall never be deſtroyed; — and 'the kingdom thereof ſhall not be left 'to other people, — it ſhall break in pie-'ces, and conſume all theſe kingdoms, 'and it ſhall ſtand for ever.' (Dan. ii. 44.) It is worthy of obſervation, that the iron and the clay are, moreover, ſaid to 'mingle themſelves with the ſeed of men;' and it is added, 'they ſhall not cleave one to another.' Thus, good and bad men being contrary the one to the other, and their reſpective intereſts as oppoſite as the ſtrength of iron and the brittleneſs of clay, cannot be blended together in the purſuit of one common cauſe; and I doubt not, that, to *men of clay*, thoſe who are too much engroſſed by the cares, the riches, and the pleaſures of this life, to attend to ſpiritual things, this intereſting prophecy will ſeem as an idle tale, and my remarks upon it as the fruits of a diſtempered brain.

Thus

Thus 'Feſtus ſaid with a loud voice,' — "Paul! thou art beſide thyſelf; much "learning doth make thee mad." (Acts xxvi. 24.) But men of iron, thoſe who mind the one thing needful, and delight in ſtudying the divine prophecies of future events, contained in the ſcriptures of the old Teſtament, may, probably, be unanimous in declaring, in the words of Paul's reply to Feſtus, 'I am not mad, but ſpeak forth the words of truth, and ſoberneſs.' Now, though I preſume it cannot be denied, that my own country, which was formerly a province of the iron Roman empire, has long been, and ſtill is, one of the political toes of the great monarchical image; though our civil conſtitution be partly ſtrong as iron, and partly brittle as clay, having been repeatedly ſhaken in its foundations by national troubles, and reſettled on its baſis by a ceſſation of ſtate-commotions; and though its blended lot of iron and clay will continue, in exact equipoiſe, till the ſaid grand prophecy ſhall receive its completion; yet, it ſurely is the duty of every member of the community, to endeavour to give it the ſtrength of iron.

I there-

I therefore, with a mind undaunted, propoſe the excluſion of eccleſiaſtics from all ſhare in the affairs of civil legiſlation,—in judicial proceedings, — and in every ſpecies of temporal power and authority. Conſequently, the ſubverſion of dioceſan epiſcopacy, and the expulſion of lords ſpiritual from a ſeat and vote in the Houſe of Peers, are the grand and leading objects in my plan of a complete reformation of our conſtitution in church; which, at preſent, by an unnatural incorporation of politics and religion in the perſons of epiſcopal ſenators, manifeſtly conſtitutes a conſiderable portion of the clay in our conſtitution in ſtate.

The Houſe of Lords, which is by many regarded as an excellent barrier againſt the tyranny and anarchy, equally reſulting from a political ſyſtem, intirely democratic on the one hand, or literally monarchical on the other; — this, in their opinion, balancing part of our tripartite conſtitution in ſtate, would not, in the leaſt degree, ſuffer from an alteration of the conſtitution in church, by ſubſtituting parochial in the place of dioceſan, epiſcopacy. The excluſion

exclusion of the Lords ſpiritual could not be attended with the leaſt detriment to Lords temporal, who, on the contrary, would not only enjoy all their preſent privileges unimpaired, but hold their debates for the welfare of the nation unreſtrained, and undiſtracted by the intrigues of meddling churchmen,—who, in whatever country they are injudiciouſly indulged with a ſhare of the civil power, are experimentally known, either to weaken, or ſubvert, the national counſels and intereſts.

To paſs over their deteſtable machinations in other European countries, will not the annals of England furniſh us with a melancholy inſtance of that ſoleciſm in politics, an *imperium in imperio*, in the perſon of Becket,—who, with conſummate craft, contrived to unite in himſelf the two ſupreme functions in church and ſtate; namely, thoſe of arch-biſhop and chancellor? which, however diſcordant, and ought ever to be kept disjoined, he enjoyed by the favour, and through the exceſſive lenity of the kindeſt of maſters, that great and wiſe king, Henry the ſecond;—and, baſely ungrateful to his royal benefactor, who had

'raiſed him from the dunghill to ſit with his 'prince,' not only thwarted all his plans of public utility,—but dared to exempt himſelf from the civil juriſdiction, aſſerting, with ſanctimonious hypocritical cant, with which he gulled the poor ignorant laity, that the clergy were not amenable to the civil magiſtrate.

This, in plain words, amounted to a declaration, that *ſacred eccleſiaſtics* might commit thefts, rapes, and murthers, on the *profane laity* with impunity, or, at leaſt, evade the capital puniſhment due for ſuch outrageous crimes againſt the peace and ſafety of civil ſociety, by commuting it for a pecuniary mulct to be paid to the church itſelf. This really was the caſe in thoſe dark ages, when prieſtcraft, enthroned by barbariſm, ignorance, and ſuperſtition, actually uſurped the civil power in one part of Europe, and ruled the ſubject kings and kingdoms of the reſt, 'which' tamely 'gave their power to the beaſt,' with a rod of iron.

But, to draw nearer to our own times, was not another arch-biſhop of Canterbury greatly inſtrumental in involving England

land in all the horrors of a civil war? and did he not inſtigate his unhappy king to the purſuit of ſuch deſpotic meaſures, as terminated in the deſtruction both of archbiſhop and king?

Again; did churchmen join the reſt of the nation in applying to the prince of Orange for deliverance from the arbitrary government of the papal bigot James the Second, till that infatuated monarch preſumed to touch the *conſecrated* rights of the church, by forcing upon them a popiſh preſident of Magdalen-College, Oxford? *then* they took the alarm, and not before. *Then* he became *unhallowed* to them, and they unfriendly to him. But a man, not unacquainted with the nature of eccleſiaſtical policy, muſt ſummon the whole of his chriſtian charity to obviate his ſuſpicions, that every other rank of men in the kingdom might have travelled, and groaned, in bondage to the deſpotiſm of James, with their conſent, to this hour, (for regal deſpotiſm and eccleſiaſtical ambition are often indiſſolubly linked together) if he had not haſtily and happily made that *inexcuſable* faux-pas, the invaſion of church-temporalities.

Laſtly, the cry of the arrogant and ambitious prieſt, Sacheverell, 'the church, the 'church, is in danger!' is yet recent in our memories, yet ſounds in our ears; — an equivocal expreſſion; admirably adapted to ſubſerve the ſiniſter views of church-policy, being capable of a double entendre, namely, either that the church of Chriſt, or the chriſtian religion, was in danger, which was by no means the caſe; or that the church of England, that is, the wealth and power of church dignitaries were in danger, which indeed all thinking good men not only wiſh to ſee endangered, but radically extirpated.

Though I do not propoſe to enumerate every particular, reſpecting the very refined ſpecies of prieſtcraft of the preſent day;— which, like a ſubterraneous buſy mole, works ſilently, but too effectually, in the dark,—and may, in the upſhot, undermine the chriſtian religion, even before it be perceived to be in danger;—yet of one late political manœuvre of the Lords ſpiritual, which favours greatly of a predilection for popery, I ſhould think myſelf inexcuſable, if I were to omit expreſſing my cordial diſapprobation in this public manner, namely,

namely, the concurrence of their ſuffrages for the *legal* eſtabliſhment of popery in Canada.

However, I will do them the juſtice to acknowledge, that my apprehenſions of their aid in the formal ſettlement of that blood-thirſty ſuperſtition in England are not of a very alarming nature. But, after experiencing their inſtrumentality (I ſpeak of them aggregately, and not altogether ſingly) in eſtabliſhing it in the ſaid remote, but extenſive, part of his majeſty's dominions, I ſhould ſtretch the line of my chriſtian charity, till it break, were I to give them credit for the goodneſs of their motive, in with-holding their aſſiſtance in this caſe. They would undoubtedly chooſe, rather to practice the art of reconciling contraries, and to exhibit an heterogeneous combination of proteſtantiſm and popery in their own perſons, than riſque the loſs of their lucrative fine-cures, by joining in an unequivocal introduction of popery in the mother-country.

To the ſaid particular flagrant inſtance of their political miſconduct I ſhall ſubjoin, without leave, one general remark,—name-

ly, that the principle of the hierarchy is invariably one and the ſame, to aggrandize itſelf, or ſecure its aggrandizement at all events, and at the expence of national welfare. It bears an eſpecial regard to that provident maxim,

——————— '*Rem* facias, *Rem*
' Si poſſis, recte;—ſi non, quocunque modo, *Rem*.'

Conſequently, though one adminiſtration may be more favourable to this ſiniſter view of the hierarchy, than another, the political conduct of ſpiritual Lords will ever, Proteus-like, aſſume various ſhapes under varying adminiſtrations. The leading principle of their court-creed being to coincide with the meaſures of every adminiſtration, which preſumes not to touch their ſacred intereſts, they ſcruple not, on a change in the direction of ſtate affairs, collectively, and almoſt individually, to join in reprobating, and giving their ſuffrages againſt, the very meaſures, which they had, not long before, approved and voted for; 'becoming all things to all men,'—whether in a ſenſe congruous, or incongruous, with that of the apoſtle Paul,—whether with views ſimilar, or diſſimilar, to thoſe, which actuated

tuated that celebrated preacher of the goſpel, is a point, which will be beſt determined by a knowledge of the ſelfiſh nature, and tendency, of all church-policy. I have only fairly ſtated, and not miſrepreſented, a matter of fact, which is ſtubborn irreſiſtible evidence;—and, the fact being ſo, it is manifeſt to a mathematical demonſtration, that whether the epiſcopal ſenators liſt themſelves on the ſide of the public-weal, or woe, is a mere matter of chance.

One biſhop, in particular, has ſignalized himſelf in his capacity, as a ſenator, during the hoſtile diſputes with our American brethren, in the amicable termination whereof the public is ſo deeply intereſted; and therefore it is allowable for any individual of the public to aſſume the offices, in the Cantabrigian phraſe, of *ſcrutator* and *taxor* of his fluctuating political conduct, and of the latent motive thereto, as far as it can, with any degree of probability, be conjectured.

At the opening of the preſent ſeſſion of parliament, he ſeems to have exhibited a notorious inſtance of intereſted tergiverſation; for, on a proſpect of the fall of the

miniſter, in conſequence of a conſiderable defection of his party, in the houſe of Lords, he joined in the revolt; and, with an appearance, at leaſt, of patriotiſm and piety, harrangued againſt the wickedneſs and inhumanity, of perſiſting in the proſecution of thoſe ſanguinary meaſures with our American brethren, which had received his public conſent and ſuffrage, in the preceding ſeſſion, attended with this peculiar circumſtance, that it was thought meet to appoint him one of the managers of a conference with the commons, for the purpoſe of addreſſing the king to purſue ſuch meaſures. Chriſtian charity *bids*, but an inſight into epiſcopal craft and ſelfiſhneſs *forbids*, me to put a favourable conſtruction on this very remarkable alteration in his legiſlative conduct. To alledge, that he was induced thereto by the example of his noble patron, and from a principle of gratitude to him, is to advance but little in his juſtification. A conſcience ſeized with remorſe for his former ſinfulneſs, in conſenting to the unnatural war, can alone juſtify his late parliamentary diſapprobation of it. *Dic, et eris mihi magnus*

nus Apollo, by what happy concurrence of circumſtances it came to paſs, that a *Lord ſpiritual* ſhould exiſt, not indeed as ſuch, but as a man, from the day of his birth to the year of *his Lord*, 1774, and be incapable of diſcerning the moral turpitude of ſhedding the Britiſh blood of our brethren of the Britiſh-American continent by our own Britiſh, and, with the change of one vowel, brutiſh, hands; and yet, within the ſpace of the next twelve-months, be bleſt with a clear perception of it. This is indeed a miracle,—a wonderful recovery of ſight to the blind.

Perhaps, Milton's arch-angel has been with him, who is recorded to have given teleſcopic diſtinctneſs of viſion to the dim optics of our firſt parent, by the judicious application of an eye-ſalve, compoſed of the two ſimples, Euphracy and Rue.

——————— 'To nobler ſights
'Michael from Adam's eyes the film removed,
'Which that falſe fruit, which promiſed clearer ſight,
'Had bred;—then purged with Euphracy, and Rue,
'The viſual nerve;—for he had much to ſee.'

In like manner, he, no doubt, has purged, with Euphracy and Rue, the mental orbs

orbs of the biſhop from that thick film of ſelf-intereſt, which ſurrounded, and darkened, them;—a ſpecies of blindneſs! far worſe in its conſequences, than the gutta ſerena, to which our ſaid admirable poet attributes the loſs of his bodily ſight.

'So thick a drop ſerene hath quench'd, their orbs,
'Or dim ſuffuſion veiled!

If ſo, I ſincerely wiſh this celeſtial oculiſt would be equally aſſiduous to open the intellectual eyes of his brethren of the mitre;—'thou celeſtial light! ſhine in-
'ward, and the mind through all her pow-
'ers irradiate;—there plant eyes; all miſt
'from thence purge, and diſperſe.'

At preſent, the flattering hopes of climbing from biſhopric to biſhopric, till they reach the ſummit of their worldly ambition, the pontificate, or arch-biſhopric, and a carking ſolicitude to ſtand ſecurely on this towering pinnacle of opulence and grandeur,—a tottering ſituation in theſe enlightened days, when the laity are no ſtrangers to the ill-founded claims of the clergy,—ſeem to be the unſeen ſprings, which actuate their political deportment. It is a very rare caſe, to find a ſingle biſhop, who will

will either ſecretly abſent himſelf from his colours, or openly deſert his corps, and refuſe to march under the banners of adminiſtration, when waved in an unrighteous cauſe;—which, though a man of great political candour, I preſume, from my knowledge of fallible humanity, may be ſometimes the caſe. When either does happen, the probability, that his tranſlation to a more gainful dioceſe depends on a change in the miniſtry, conveys no very favourable idea of the diſintereſtedneſs of his conduct.

The preſent worthy biſhop of Saint Aſaph, who wants not my mouth to ſound the trumpet of his praiſe, ſeems indeed to have acted on a principle truly patriotic in a certain political point. Whether he were really in the right, and adminiſtration in the wrong, it is foreign to my purpoſe to enquire. In this pamphlet I confine myſelf to eccleſiaſtical abuſes of our moſt holy religion,—not interfering with politics any farther, than they are neceſſarily connected with my church-reforming plan, which profeſſedly aims at disjoining the diſcordant characters of theologian and politician.

litician. In this unnatural union the man of God is ſo entirely abſorbed in the man of the world, that not one ſpiritual Lord, though he enjoy the benefit of a good example ſet him by *his equals*, the clerical petitioners, has dared, as I before obſerved, to ſtand forth in the houſe of Lords an avowed champion of injured chriſtianity, eſſentially and aggravatingly injured, by the continuance of the preſent corrupt conſtitution in church.

This well-known truth, ſuper-added to the afore-cited ſpecimen of their attachment to the church of Rome, in the inſtance of their parliamentary concurrence, in eſtabliſhing popery in Canada,—and the ſeveral examples of eccleſiaſtical craft, which I have ſelected from the hiſtory of England, are abundantly ſufficient to prove, that church-power and wealth are ever incompatible with the welfare of the ſtate, both in ſpiritual and civil concerns; and that, while churchmen are permitted to be veſted with any public ſhare in the legiſlature, or with any private direction in the government, of Great Britain, they will

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ever poſtpone, and even ſacrifice, the general good to their own particular intereſt.

Seeing then the uniform national miſchiefs produced by hierarchs in England in times paſt and preſent, with a view to prevent them in time to come, and to perfect my plan of parochial epiſcopacy, which, by the propoſed equality of maintenance, ſtrikes at the root of church-wealth and church-power; I adviſe the excluſion of churchmen from a ſeat and vote in the Houſe of Lords, and approve likewiſe of depriving them of a vote at the election of the Commons. In ſhort, I am unwilling, theſe my parochial biſhops, overſeers, or paſtors, of the flock ſhould bear any part in civil affairs, in virtue of their ſpiritual profeſſion; but wiſh them merely to have a ſuffrage at elections for members of the Houſe of Commons, on the terms of other freeholders; — namely, if, in conſequence of their own private fortune, they be poſſeſt of freeholds, or of any other civil qualifications, which intitle them to a vote in any county, city, or borough, in common with the reſt of his majeſty's ſubjects.

Laſtly,

Laſtly, though I mean to propoſe, that, in general, there ſhould be but one parochial biſhop, or paſtor, in one pariſh, which would prove an excellent method of enforcing reſidence, and preclude the neceſſity of a particular act of parliament to enjoin it; — yet I ſubmit to the conſideration of the legiſlature this quære, Whether it might not be adviſable to make, together with an equality of paſtoral maintenance, a nearly equal diviſion of the paſtoral charge, by appointing more parochial biſhops than one in particular caſes; as for inſtance, in a large populous pariſh; and, for every ſuch pariſh furniſhed with an additional paſtor, diminiſhing the number of parochial biſhops in ſmall thinly-inhabited pariſhes; which might be effected, by beſtowing the paſtoral charge of two ſuch pariſhes on one paſtor?

Farthermore; in order to preſerve this one equal, and only, order of miniſters of the goſpel entire; and to avoid the neceſſity of employing hired curates, as at preſent; neighbouring paſtors might be directed to aſſiſt each other gratuitouſly, in caſe of ſickneſs, or on any urgent occaſion, and parti-

particularly, without fee or reward, to officiate in an adjoining church and pariſh, during an unavoidable vacancy, on the death of a paſtor, — which vacancy ſhould be filled up, in the ſucceſſive methods before ſpecified, without delay. For this purpoſe, on ſuch emergencies, it will be neceſſary for the congregations of two pariſhes to diſpenſe with the performance of divine ſervice once on Sundays in places, where it has been cuſtomarily performed twice.

This is the ſcheme of church-reformation formed by one of little importance in the world, from a ſincere, ſteady, and active, love of God and man, — from the laudable motive of approving himſelf a practical diſciple of his honoured and only maſter in religious concerns, Chriſt,—from a principle of true ſound patriotiſm, which is a material branch of genuine chriſtianity; — by one, who, as being a miniſter of the goſpel officiating in the Church of England, judges, he cannot demonſtrate that patriotiſm with more propriety, and in a manner more conſiſtent with the holineſs of his function, than by propoſing,

and

and joining in, every legal attempt to reſcue the doctrines of God from bondage to the commandments of men, — and to gradually reſtore to every individual the full enjoyment, and unreſtrained exerciſe, of that ſpecies of civil or ſocial liberty, which is ſtiled religious; — by one, who is not ſelf-opinionated enough, to arrogantly think, that his project of a total change, and amendment, of the preſent civil eſtabliſhment in religion is incapable of additional improvements; — by one, who, with more ſpirit and intrepidity, than prudence and caution, has already ſhaken the pillars of prieſtcraft and orthodoxy, — and intends, '*dum ſpiritus hos regit artus*,' to bend, Samſon-like, his whole weight againſt them, and either tumble the anti-chriſtian edifice about his ears, and perhaps bury himſelf in the ruins,—or render the laudable enterprize more atchievable to others endued with greater ſtrength and ability, than himſelf.

Not raſhly confident, like Peter, I devoutly pray to God for a ſupply of chriſtian fortitude, to enable me to 'go, even unto 'priſon and unto death,' if unhappily urgent

gent neceſſity ſhould ſo require, for the ſake of pure and primitive chriſtianity, which, I am conſcious, cannot be re-eſtabliſhed, without the previous diſſolution of that pernicious incorporation of ſpiritual things with civil, which hierarchs, with great ſubtlety, denominate an *alliance betwixt church and ſtate*;—and, with a ſhew of humility, inſinuate, that the latter cannot flouriſh without the former. I have in mine eye that artfully-expreſſed part of the late addreſs of the convocation to the king, where they ſay,—'*Permit us, Sire, in all* '*humility, to ſay, that the eccleſiaſtical part* '*of our conſtitution is no leſs excellent than* '*the civil, and that they are ſo cloſely and in-* '*timately blended with each other, that, as* '*experience has ſhewn, they muſt ſtand or fall* '*together.*'

Now, without *all*, or an iota of, *humility*, external or internal, I boldly pronounce, that their Lordſhips *lie* under a miſtake, through the whole of this incomparable portion of their addreſs. To prove that herein I adhere ſtrictly to truth, I propoſe to go through a formal and regular examination and confutation of it, from

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beginning to end; in the firſt place animadverting on that very *modeſt* aſſertion, ‘ *that the eccleſiaſtical* part of our conſtitu-‘ tion is no leſs excellent than the *civil*.’ I ſincerely give them credit for their faith in the truth of this aſſertion. Certainly they think ſo. Spiritual Lords, and their ſubordinate dignitaries, deans, canons, &c. who not only taſte, but are crammed with, and batten and fatten on, the ſweets of it, do not belie the ſentiments of their hearts, in acknowledging to their king, ‘ that the ‘ eccleſiaſtical part of our conſtitution is ‘ no leſs excellent than the civil.’ It is not impoſſible that ſleek and pampered high-prieſts may think it is more ſo; — though prudence, of which they have a very competent ſhare, and, no doubt, *modeſty* and *humility* forbid them to utter the whole of their thoughts to majeſty.

But can many rectors and vicars, and, particularly, the half-ſtarved curates, think and ſay ſo? Thoſe poor wretches! who are the true ſhepherds, biſhops, or overſeers, of the flock; not they, who, unlike Jaſon, carry off the *golden fleece*, without the trouble and hazard of an argonantic expedition.

dition. The hardſhips which the curates endure are ſo inexpreſſibly ſevere, that they would almoſt literally ſtarve, if they did not occaſionally experience the hoſpitality of their opulent neighbours; — a circumſtance, which muſt give pain to men, whoſe minds are endued with that ſenſibility, and are of that liberal turn, which are the natural reſult of an academic education.

Senatorial biſhops may indeed be ſtiled biſhops, or Επισκοποι; not from looking over, but from *over-looking*, the flock. And how ſhould it be otherwiſe, than overlooked, or neglected, by them? How can a dioceſan biſhop, a nominal biſhop over a thouſand pariſhes, be their real paſtor, — when one pariſh finds a ſufficient employment for one man, if, from a conſcientious principle, and with unremitting diligence, he perform his duty, and feed and tend the ſheep with a ſhepherd's care? Much leſs can *right reverend Fathers in God* nurſe their wide extended family in the Lord with the milk of God's word, if they conſume their winters in attending the levees of the prime miniſter of the day,

and in forming advantageous worldly connexions, which have a proſpect of terminating in the exchange of a gainful conſecration for a more lucrative tranſlation, (for with *ſacred churchmen*, as with *profane laymen*, *creſcit amor nummi, quantum ipſa pecunia creſcit*,) and if they loiter away their ſummers in that ſupine repoſe and indolence, which are neceſſary to recruit their jaded ſpirits for a renewal of their political manœuvres, at the returning ſeaſon. Their primary and triennial curſory viſitations, attended with occaſional confirmations, rapidly hurried over at the principal market-towns of their reſpective dioceſes, together with their charges to the clergy, are but a dull ſolemn farce, and burleſque on the true active and primitive epiſcopal charge.

This is unwelcome, *uncourtly* language, to which hierarchs are but little accuſtomed; but it is the language of truth, naked, unadorned, undiſguiſed, truth.

'Quid ſit pulchrum, quid turpe, quid utile, quid
'non,' planè dico; —
'Quid verum, atque decens, curo, et rogo, et omnis in hoc ſum;
'Ne quid falſi dicere audeo, ne quid veri non audeo;'

For, ſurely, if the late Lord Cheſterfield could

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cite ſcraps of French and Italian without incurring the imputation of pedantry, I may be permitted occaſionally to introduce Latin quotations, when I can bend them to my purpoſe, without fear of becoming obnoxious to the like cenſure.

But to proceed; — biſhops cannot but think, and well may ſay, 'that the eccle-'ſiaſtical part of our conſtitution is no leſs 'excellent than the civil.' But does the nation in general, or the legiſlature in particular, think and ſay ſo?—Do King, Lords temporal, and Commons, or the conſtituents of the latter, pronounce the one no leſs excellent than the other; that eccleſiaſtical part, which ſtrips the civil of a very conſiderable portion of the lands, throughout England and Wales?—I trow not.

The artifice of a late Engliſh *pontifex maximus*, is much too groſs to delude the underſtandings of my countrymen of the eighteenth century. As the whole of this anecdote of his life is ſingularly curious, and will ſtrongly mark his character to poſterity, I ſhall relate it for the entertainment of my readers among the laity.

A late worthy law-baronet waited, in behalf of his client, on Cantuar. Archiepiſc. to treat with him about the renewal of a leaſe of a part of the pontifical lands. His Grace, it ſeems, exacted, in the opinion of the baronet, too exorbitant a fine as the terms of renewal;—who, accordingly, remonſtrated with him on the ſubject, and offered to give him a leſs conſiderable, but, in his judgment, more reaſonable, ſum, than the amount of the fine demanded by the arch-biſhop. 'What?' cantingly replies he,—'give no more for God Al-'mighty's land?' An *interrogatory reply!* which certainly *implied*, that God Almighty was an oppreſſive rack-renting landlord, and levelled the all-generous Creator with his contemptible creature, the ſordid narrow-ſoul'd miſer, repreſenting him, in fact, as loving money, and commiſſioning the arch-biſhop, as his ſteward, to drive a hard bargain with his tenants.

But I am happy in the perſuaſion, that my lay-brethren are too diſcerning to deem church-land God Almighty's land, in contradiſtinction to land occupied by laymen; whereof, whatever may be the ſentiments

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of hierarchs blinded by the God of this world, ſelf-intereſt, the ſupreme being is not leſs the prime landlord, than of the former. In truth, I wonder that an arch-biſhop, celebrated for his worldly wiſdom, ſhould attempt to defraud a barriſter at law, in particular, of his common ſenſe by ſo bare-faced an impoſition,—and ſhould not have given credit to the tale, if I had not heard it atteſted by a friend, in whoſe veracity I can confide, with all human confidence. An old poacher, who ſets ſprings to catch woodcocks, would have concealed them with greater caution, and been aſhamed to have marred his art with ſuch vile bungling.

The biſhops indeed of the preſent day alledge, with more conſummate prieſtcraft than the defunct arch-biſhop exhibited, in the ſecond poſition of the ſame part of their aforeſaid addreſs, that 'they,' meaning the eccleſiaſtical and civil parts of our conſtitution, 'are ſo cloſely, and intimately, blended with each other, that, as experience has 'ſhewn, they muſt ſtand, or fall, together.'

That they are 'cloſely and intimately 'blended with each other,' is true, too

true, and is a matter of fact greatly lamented by all thinking Chriſtians, who ſincerely wiſh, that the miniſters of the goſpel were totally unconnected with miniſters of ſtate, unconcerned in politics,—and diveſted of every the leaſt ſhare in the buſineſs of civil legiſlation. It is their indiſputable province, to adhere ſolely to the faithful diſcharge of their religious function, as paſtors of the flock of Chriſt;—and, as not to uſurp dominion over the faith and conſciences of men, by calling in the civil power to ratify, and require, under the ſanction of ſevere penal laws, ſubſcription to a religious ſyſtem and liturgy, framed by fallible eccleſiaſtics; ſo alſo, not to interfere, in the leaſt, with the department of the civil magiſtrate, but merely to 'pay tribute to Cæſar,' and chearfully yield obedience to the laws of their country, in all matters relative to a juſt and free government, which can never flouriſh, if impeded in its operations by the intrigues of intermeddling prieſts.

I cannot therefore agree with the Lords ſpiritual in declaring, 'that they,' (the eccleſiaſtical and civil parts of our conſtitution)

on) ' are *ſo* cloſely and intimately blended ' with each other, that they muſt ſtand or ' fall together.' On the contrary, it is obvious, that the fall of the church would prove the riſe of the ſtate. If religion and politics were neither cloſely and intimately, nor at all, blended with each other;—if the provinces of Chriſt and of the civil magiſtrate were kept as detached and ſeparate, as they are in their own nature different;—and, particularly, if men were not permitted to unite, in their own perſons, the two diſcordant heterogeneous characters of theologian and politician, in the inſtance of a Lord ſpiritual; both the intereſts of Chriſtianity, and the welfare of the community, would be reſpectively and conſiderably promoted. The proſperity of the nation, and the exaltation of the univerſal church of Chriſt, depend greatly upon the humiliation of the church of England, as now eſtabliſhed by law.

If parochial epiſcopacy were to be erected on the ruins of dioceſan;—if parochial biſhops or paſtors were excluded from all ambitious views, by the enjoyment of an equality of maintenance, in the inſtance of the

the annual ſalary of two hundred pounds each, ſecured by the legiſlative, and paid by the executive, part of government;—if the abolition of all eccleſiaſtical dignities,—the ſuppreſſion of tithes,—and the ſeizure of the lands of the church, and all other its poſſeſſions and revenues, (in which caſe the ſtate would but reinſtate itſelf in the poſſeſſion of its own property too freely, in ſome inſtances laviſhly, and in all injudiciouſly, granted to the church) were once happily accompliſhed,—'a conſummation devoutly to be wiſhed!'—the tripartite conſtitution in ſtate, conſiſting of King, Lords temporal, and Commons, would remain unimpaired by this total alteration and amendment, of the conſtitution in church. Beſides,—it would eventually receive an acceſſion of ſtrength and vigour, eſpecially as, in conſequence of ſuch amendment, the miniſters of the goſpel would be deprived of thoſe unneceſſary and impolitic privileges, a ſeat and vote in the houſe of Lords, and a vote at the election of the commons;—which laſt they ſhould only be permitted to enjoy, in common with other freeholders, citizens, and burgeſſes,

burgeſſes, in virtue of any private freehold eſtate, or other civil qualification, they may poſſeſs, which intitles them to a vote; in like manner as Paul was intitled to the immunities of a citizen of Rome, by being born free, in the municipal city of Tarſus in Cilicia. Moreover, thoſe parochial paſtors, who are academical graduates of Oxford or Cambridge, provided they be admitted to any degree above that of bachelor of arts, would enjoy a ſtatutable right of ſuffrage, liable to certain reſtrictions, at the election of parliamentary repreſentatives of their reſpective univerſities.

But not only the three eſtates of the realm would be benefited by this new arrangement of the eccleſiaſtical ſyſtem;—the advantages likewiſe, viewed both in a religious and political light, which (excluſively of the great national benefits reſulting from the propoſed appropriation of the immenſe ſum of money ariſing from the ſale of church-lands and church-tithes, &c. to the payment of the national debt) would accrue to the community from the ſubſtitution of parochial, in lieu of dioceſan, epiſcopacy, with the other conſequent amend-

mendments of the conſtitution in church, would be conſiderable and immediate.

The parochial biſhops being made equal in point of maintenance, and thus removed from all temptations to ambition and avarice, would not be ambitious and avaritious; — and, conſequently, the people, not having the evil example before their eyes in theſe points, which is now often preſented to them in the perſons of eccleſiaſtical dignitaries, will probably become leſs attached to the gratification of 'the pride of life, and the luſt of the eyes.' And, as there is a natural concatenation as well betwixt vices as virtues, when two links of the chain are broken, the third remaining link, 'the luſt of the fleſh,' cannot ſupport itſelf.

Farthermore; Subſcription to the truth of articles of faith, and of a liturgy compoſed by men, being, on this plan of church-reformation, intirely aboliſhed, contention about different modes and forms of faith would gradually ceaſe; — and, the ſcriptures being eſtabliſhed as the ſole rule of the faith and practice of Chriſtians, — and every man, both among the preachers and

hearers

hearers of the word, enjoying the free exerciſe of the right of private judgment, — that uniformity in religious opinions would, in conſequence of an unreſtrained, unprejudiced, and diſpaſſionate, enquiry into 'the 'truth, as it is in Jeſus,' in proceſs of time, take effect, which the compilers of theſe human ſyſtems of divinity had in view, but have failed to produce; — they having actually given birth to thoſe endleſs diverſities in points of faith, which they were intended to prevent.

Subſcription indeed to the public peruſal of the preſent, or ſome generally leſs exceptionable, liturgy, would be required from theſe parochial biſhops. But this would not have the ſame bad tendency with ſubſcription to the truth of any human form of prayer. It would by the people be conſidered as neceſſary, and eſſential, to a mode of public worſhip eſtabliſhed by the civil power; which, though I do not, yet the public and the legiſlature ſeem to think it has a right to enjoin, without the expreſs permiſſion of Chriſt himſelf.

Theſe would be ſome of the good religious,

gious, and moral, conſequences of the propoſed church-reformation.

The natural, or political, happy effects are obvious; — of which one would be an unlimited improvement, and increaſe, in agriculture, which, in this caſe, would no longer be ſtinted in its growth by that baneful weed, the law of tithes. Again; the parochial biſhops, being limited in point of maintenance, would have no private intereſt to purſue, ſeparate from public welfare; and, conſequently, the great wheels of legiſlation and government would not drag heavily, but move freely, when unimpeded in their career by the wiles of ſelf-intereſted churchmen.

Many more beneficial conſequences would reſult from this, or a ſimilar, new arrangement of the conſtitution in church. But theſe are ſufficient to evince its great utility. I ſhall therefore only add, that the adoption of it would eventually realize the object of a part of the prayer to God, which the clergy occaſionally uſe before ſermon,—namely, 'that religion and pie-'ty, virtue and good manners, and what-'ever elſe is commendable and praiſe-wor-

thy,

'thy, may for ever flouriſh and abound.' Particularly, in this caſe, 'that bond of 'perfectneſs, and of all virtues, charity,' the diſtinguiſhing characteriſtic of the chriſtian religion, which is deſcribed in all its various amiable ſpecies and properties, by the great apoſtle to the gentiles, in his firſt epiſtle to his Corinthian converts, — that divine principle, univerſal benevolence operating in beneficence, — in ſhort, unbounded philanthropy would inſenſibly prevail among all ranks of men, and, producing the good fruits natural to this moral ever-green, 'make our Jeruſalem a 'praiſe in all the earth,' and give it a pleaſing foretaſte of the ſpiritual joys of heaven.

Swayed by the united force of theſe weighty arguments in favour of the deſtruction of dioceſan, and the eſtabliſhment of parochial epiſcopacy, I cannot but deny the truth of that poſition of the ſpirirual Lords, contained in the addreſs of the convocation, 'that they' (the eccleſiaſtical and civil parts of our conſtitution) 'are ſo 'cloſely and intimately blended with each 'other, that they muſt ſtand or fall toge-

'ther.'

'ther.' This is ſo far from being true, that, on the contrary, it has been demonſtrated on uncontrovertible grounds, that the humiliation of the church would prove the exaltation of the ſtate; — the ſtate not only not fall with the church, but ſtand more ſecure and ſteady on its ruins; — the crown and ſceptre flouriſh without the mitre and croſier; — and both the chriſtian religion, and the Engliſh government and nation, profit and proſper by the deſtruction of the hierarchy, which is founded on a groſs corruption, and perverſion, of the principles of that divine religion.

I do not overlook the artful ſuggeſtion of the biſhops, contained in the parentheſis, — 'as experience has ſhewn.' — 'They are,' ſay they, (namely, the eccleſiaſtical and civil parts of our conſtitution) 'ſo cloſely 'and intimately blended with each other, 'that, as experience has ſhewn, they muſt 'ſtand or fall together.' In this their demonſtrative experience, it is not difficult to diſcern their alluſion to the troublous times of Charles the Firſt, — and their inſinuation, that, as then, ſo alſo now, and ever, the civil part of the conſtitution muſt fall with

with the eccleſiaſtical, and be involved in one common ruin. But we muſt not fallaciouſly argue, by parity of reaſon, from an imparity of circumſtances. That the ſtate of things then, and now, are widely different, nay, are ſo little in point, that they are diametrically oppoſite, I ſhall but too clearly prove to their ſpiritual Lordſhips.

About the middle of the ſeventeenth century, a weak tyrant, during a ſeries of fifteen years, preſumed to govern without a parliament, without the concurrence either of Lords or Commons; — dared to tax the people at his own pleaſure, without their conſent given by themſelves, or by their repreſentatives; — and, when, at the end of that period, he condeſcended to call a parliament, which he laboured in vain to fill with his creatures, not only cajoled, and deceived, the Commons, turning a deaf ear to their remonſtrances for a redreſs of grievances, — but ruſhed, armed with his guards, into their Houſe, — uſurped the Speaker's chair, — and, by way of finiſhing ſtroke to his former undue ſtretches of Royal Prerogative, impriſoned thoſe of the members who had rendered themſelves

moſt obnoxious to his diſpleaſure, by the moſt active oppoſition to his arbitrary mandates.

It cannot ſurely be a matter of ſurprize, it is, on the contrary, a natural effect, that a King, who acted in this outrageous violent manner, ſhould drive a public-ſpirited Houſe of Commons to extremities on their ſide. They, juſtly dreading the worſt conſequences to themſelves, and to the public, from the pernicious evil counſels of the ſpiritual lord, Laud, and the temporal lord, Strafford, by which the king was governed, not only compaſſed the merited decapitation of the one, (who then perſonally experienced the bleſt effects of an *alliance betwixt church and ſtate*) and of the other; but farther unwarrantably proceeded to vote the whole houſe of lords uſeleſs:—unwarrantably, I ſay;—for this very unconſtitutional meaſure could not be juſtified on any other principle, than the alarming danger of the entire loſs of liberty and property, into which they, and the diſtracted nation, were precipitated by their unwiſe and unworthy king.

If they had happily confined themſelves to the ſingle object of expelling epiſcopal ſenators from that houſe, they would have deſerved ſo well of poſterity, that it would have ſurpaſſed the power of language to give an exaggerated diſplay of their merits.

Towards the cloſe of the eighteenth century, a propoſal is humbly and reſpectfully offered to the legiſlature, to alter the conſtitution in church, by an exchange of dioceſan for parochial epiſcopacy. This alteration, with other concurrent amendments, of which the many and great advantages have been before enumerated, is propoſed to be made, not in oppoſition to the legiſlature, but by it alone, — by the joint concurrence of the King, the temporal Lords, and the Commons.

Now, how can a compariſon be formed betwixt an event in the reign of Charles the Firſt, when Lords ſpiritual and temporal fell together, — an event! which, when traced upwards to one of its true primary cauſes, will be found to originate in the machinations of an hierarch meddling with politics, and confirming his ſovereign in his exalted ideas of kingly prerogative ;—

what trait of ſimilitude ſubſiſts betwixt this event,—and an event to be now accompliſhed, in the reign of George the Third, (God bleſs him!) by a ſolemn act of the whole legiſlative body, the biſhops excepted? For, notwithſtanding the biſhops will, on the propoſed plan, receive penſions for life, equivalent to the revenues of their reſpective ſuppreſt ſees, it is at laſt a dubious point, whether they will give their ſuffrages in favour of an act of parliament, which will have for its avowed, and leading, object the annihilation of dioceſan epiſcopacy, and their own immediate deprivation of a ſeat and vote in the houſe of Lords.

Theſe events muſt neceſſarily be ſo very diſſimilar, that no two things in nature can be more heterogeneous.

In the one caſe, '*as experience hath ſhewn,*' the eccleſiaſtical and civil parts of our conſtitution fell together; — and why? — becauſe they were overturned by the outrageous violence of the commons alone, who ſucceſsfully oppoſed force to force, their king being the firſt aggreſſor.

In

In the other inſtance, *as experience cannot but ſhew*, the eccleſiaſtical part of our conſtitution will only undergo a ſalutary complete reformation, in a peaceable, upright, legal way, effected by the king and parliament, not merely without danger, but with ſtability, to the conſtitution in ſtate,—with manifeſt unſpeakable advantages to the three branches of the legiſlature. They will then be able to proceed, with vigour and unanimity, in their councils for the welfare of the public, which likewiſe will have abundant occaſion to rejoice, as it will be everlaſtingly, and almoſt inſtantaneouſly, benefited, both in its religious and political intereſts, when the preſent cloſe and intimate, but unnatural, union betwixt religion and politics, exhibited in the twofold characters of ſpiritual Lords, ſhall be thus happily diſſolved.

With the eye of imagination, I ſee their Lordſhips ſarcaſtically ſmile, ſmoothing their bands and frocks, and ſtroking the delicate little ruffles of their beautiful lawn-ſleeves. Methinks too, I hear them thus joyfully venting their thoughts in ſoliloquy ;—what ?—Does ‘ this puny adverſary

'think to diſlodge us, whoſe comfortable 'neſt is built on the inacceſſible top, of a 'rock, cloſely allied as we are with the 'ſtate?'—*Allied with the ſtate!* an equivocal expreſſion; which the biſhops chooſe to adopt, as being calculated to effectually anſwer their purpoſe, of concealing from the hood-winked people their genuine meaning, which, in plain terms, amounts to this,—namely, that they are intimately connected with every adminiſtration.

But let them beware of an exceſs of confidence;—as the time may come, nay, perhaps is not ſo far diſtant as they may imagine, when the incenſed nation, remembering, that dioceſan biſhops, who are too uniformly the enemies, as well of every branch of civil liberty, as of that which is ſtiled religious, voted in general, in favour of ſanguinary meaſures with America, may urge the ſuppreſſion of their ſpiritual baronies, as publicly as, and more effectually than, I do now.

In the interim, the Lords ſpiritual, (the biſhops of Saint Aſaph and Exeter excepted) as they either gave their ſuffrages for, or did not vote againſt, the preſent unnatural

tural war, ought, if they would wiſh to be diſtinguiſhed by a conſiſtency of conduct, to voluntarily contribute the tenth of their epiſcopal revenues towards the ſupport of it. In this particular ſpecies of ſenatorial merit, Mr. Diotrephes, and two of his ſuffragan-prelates, ſo peculiarly ſurpaſs the reſt of their brethren, that it is juſt and reaſonable they ſhould, by way of recompence, be actually employed in the execution of thoſe violent proceedings, which they ſo readily approved, and encouraged, in their legiſlative capacity.

Incidents may ariſe, which I, '*in all humility*,' preſume, will urge the neceſſity of embracing this ſeemingly whimſical propoſal. For inſtance, if the three generals, ſent with freſh forces againſt the refractory Boſtonians, ſhould, by an unforeſeen miſchance, fail in the enterprize, or but partly ſucceed in it, through an omiſſion to puſh a victory far enough, — and, from a principle of compaſſion natural to our brave officers, ſtop the purſuit, — give quarter,—and, in ſo doing, leave the execution of their orders incomplete,—(though, in truth, I do not entertain ſo uncharita-

ble an opinion of adminiſtration, as to ſuſpect that their orders to the generals extend to a general ſlaughter) it might ſeem a quære deſerving the conſideration of thoſe who employed theſe merciful ſons of Mars, whether they ought not to be ſuperſeded in the ſupreme command by other three generals? To this a ſecond quære naturally ſucceeds,—but who ſhall theſe be? My anſwer is, let Diotrepes be one, who, unmindful of the goſpel of peace, is ſaid to have given the firſt vote in the houſe of Lords for an addreſs to his majeſty, in behalf of a civil war with our fellow-ſubjects in America; and let the two lords-biſhops who were appointed managers of a conference with the Commons for that purpoſe, make the number three, — the favourite number of the heathens, (who had their three Graces, their three fates, their three furies, &c. &c. &c.) and not leſs ſo of the chriſtian Platoniſts of the philoſophic ſchool of Alexandria in Egypt, and their followers, the reputed orthodox of our own time and country.

Whether the unremitting proſecution of this political *Filicide* be pernicious or ſalutary, inglorious or honourable, I will not

now preſume to decide, it being a ſettled point with me, in this publication, to ſteer to the leeward of politics ſo far, as the nature of my church-reforming plan will admit.—I mean merely to hazard an opinion, that to thoſe biſhops, who, as ſenators, were moſt active in promoting this bloody buſineſs, the ſole, or, at leaſt, the chief management, and military execution of it, ſhould, in common juſtice, be confided.

Eccleſiaſtical generalſhip will be but a revival of an antient cuſtom, when biſhops uſually appeared at the head of armies. — This worthy triumvirate of epiſcopal barons, being not regularly trained to arms, may indeed prove at firſt ſomewhat aukward in the handling of ſwords and muſquets. But a little practice, joined with much zeal for the honour and glory of their good mother, the church, will remedy this inconvenience, and reconcile them to the uſe of theſe weapons of war; — ſo that, ere it be long, they will equal, if not excel, as well in military ſkill, as in bravery, thoſe renowned Roman triumviri, Cæſar, Pompey, and Craſſus, — Octavius, Antony, and Lepidus; —and be cemented together

together by a mere indiſſoluble bond of union, than they were.

Since then to the modern enlightened laity church-excommunications and anathematizations are a mere brutum fulmen, — and the wiſe anti-epiſcopal preſbyterians in particular will ridicule them, as an harmleſs bounce of powder without ſhot, let theſe military biſhops at once drop the ſword of the ſpirit, and graſp the ſword of ſtate; — and, with an a-propos ſcrap of ſcripture in their mouths, — 'ſword! go through the land!' — by way of ſignal for battle, and to *ſanctify* the work of blood, ruſh boldly to the fight, and diſdain to return the reeking blade to its peaceful ſcabbard, till they have exterminated the obſtinate rebels, from one extremity of Maſſachuſett's Bay to the other.

The church of Rome exhibits a perpetual memorial, that eccleſiaſtics, when armed with the civil power, are ſtrangers to mercy and the fitteſt ſavages to be employed as executioners. But, in truth, the clergy of all civil eſtabliſhments in religion, more or leſs, love power, and always abuſe it; — and the annals of England abound in teſti-

teſtimonies, that ‘ *the tender mercies* of *proteſtant hierarchies* of every denomination are ‘ *cruel.*’

My old favourite ſchool-acquaintance, Horace, preſents us, in the entrance of his Ars Poetica, with a ludicrous monſter of his own creation;

‘ Humano capiti cervicem pictor equinam
‘ Jungere ſi velit, et varias inducere plumas
‘ Undique collatis membris, ut turpiter atrum
‘ Deſinat in piſcem mulier formoſa ſuperne;
‘ Spectatum admiſſi, riſum teneatis, amici?’

In like manner, I, who engage to equip Mr. Diotrephes, and his nobile par fratrum, for the American expedition, propoſe to dreſs them ſo, as that they ſhall exhibit an appearance not leſs droll, groteſque, and laughable, than Horace's monſter.

Let us ſuppoſe then their accoutrements to conſiſt of a motley compound of epiſcopal robes and military regimentals. However obſcure and ænigmatical the oddity of thus halving their dreſs may, at the firſt view, appear; — yet, on reflexion, we ſhall be ſenſible of the peculiar propriety of adhering

hering to a ſtrict proportion betwixt theſe contradictory habits, as it will ſuggeſt, in general, a plain alluſion to the modeſt poſition of the biſhops, — 'that the eccleſiaſtical part of our conſtitution is no leſs excellent than the civil;' — and, in particular, a natural emblem of their ſubſequent aſſertion, 'that they are cloſely and intimately blended with each other.'

To begin with the head, which, whoever means not to affront, muſt admit to be the *capital* part of every man; — let them, in lieu of helmet, be ſupplied with an exact moiety of the cloven mitre, and of the laced fiercely-cocked hat, with the martial cockade, 'intimately blended with each other.'

Let one arm be furniſhed with the venerable lawn-ſleeve, not ſo full as common, and tucked up, that it may not prove an hindrance to the lighting down of its valour; — and let its fellow be provided with the officer's common red cloth ſleeve, diſtinguiſhed with the flaming epaulet.

Let one hand be armed, offenſively, with the ſword of the fleſh; — and the other, defenſively, with 'the ſhield of faith,' —

that

that is, a ſhield compoſed of more than ſeven-fold ſheets of paſte-board, written, within and without, with the thirty-nine articles of the faith of the church of England, 'wherewith they ſhall be able to 'quench all the fiery darts of the wicked' diſſenters, — and to defy the muſquet-balls of their excellent markſmen, the riflemen.

Let one ſide of the body be clothed with the prelatical frock, and the other dreſſed in full regimentals; and let an ornament be thrown tranſverſely over the whole, formed out of an equal portion of the black ſcarf, and of the crimſon ſaſh.

Laſtly, to deſcend regularly to the feet, let one thigh be ſeen covered with a moiety of the breeches, one leg be ευκνημις, or well-booted, — and one heel armed, like that of Hudibras, with a ſpur; — let the other thigh and leg be guarded with epiſcopal petticoats, ſhorter and ſtraiter than uſual, for the ſame obvious reaſons which were applicable to the arm, viz. that its activity may not be reſtrained by any impediment in the field of battle; — and let the remaining foot be ſecured with the

common

common buckled ſhoe, as my warrior-biſhops cannot require, that either of 'their 'feet' ſhould be 'ſhod with the prepara-'tion of the goſpel of peace.' In like manner, 'the helmet of ſalvation,—the 'breaſt-plate of righteouſneſs,'—and 'the 'girdle of truth about their loins, and of 'faithfulneſs about their reins,' may very well be diſpenſed with, as being no eſſential parts of their eccleſiaſtico-military armour.

'And now, gem'men! walk in, and 'ſee the ſight:—my three martial biſhops, 'completely accoutred, cap-a-piè!—tho' 'the ſight of either of them, ſingly, be 'worth double the price of Cox's exhibi-'tion-tickets, all to be ſeen,—ſuch is the 'public ſpirit of the ſhew-man!—*gratis!* 'walk in! gem'men!—*nothing* can be 'cheaper!—and,

'Spectatum admiſſi, riſum teneatis, amici?'

But my *moſt* reverend and right reverend generals ſhall not experience my unfeigned regard for them, in the ſingle circumſtance alone, of equipping them for the American expedition, with a genuine propriety of

of taſte, conſpicuous in a judicious aſſortment of an exact proportion of the epiſcopal and military habits, graceful, when ſeparate, but particularly becoming, when '*cloſely and intimately blended with each* '*other.*' They ſhall receive an additional indiſputable teſtimony of my friendſhip and kindneſs for them, in the inſtance of employing my imagination to invent for them a banner, ſuitable to the novelty, and ſignificant of the nature, of their important warfare.

This then, being a bloody buſineſs, evidently calls for the diſplay of a *red* flag, on which ſhall be pourtrayed an expreſſive coat of arms. But as, I apprehend, it would be labour loſt to ſearch the college for an eſcutcheon applicable to the occaſion, I ſhall make bold, in this very particular emergency, which ſurely will juſtify my audacity, to invade the herald's right and office.

Pardonnez moi! thou noble earl and hereditary marſhal of England!—ye kings of Arms, Garter, Clarencieux, and Norroy! ye heralds, Cheſter, York, Windſor, Somerſet, Lancaſter, and Richmond! ye Pur-

Purſuivants, Portcullis, Rouge-Croix, Rouge-Dragon, and Blue-Mantle! — and ye heralds extraordinary, Norfolk, Arundel, and Mowbray! — if, without applying for your ſpecial licence and authority, I uſurpingly declare, that the arms and quarterings, blazoned in manner following, do of right belong to my three military biſhops, as it is entered upon record in my court of Chivalry, and teſtified by me, viz.

A croſs embattled or, paſſing the whole length and breadth of the ſhield, between, 1ſt, field purpure, on a feſs gules the regal crown, and the epiſcopal mitre, with their reſpective appendages, the ſceptre and croſier; — the mitre with two labels pendent argent, garniſhed or. — 2d, Field azure, a ſtaff in pale or, and thereupon a croſs patée argent, ſurmounted of a pall of the laſt, and charged by four other like croſſes fitched ſable, edged and fringed as the ſecond.—3dly, Field gules, croſs ſwords in ſaltier. — 4thly, Field as before, four croſslets fitched betwixt croſs-keys in ſaltier.—The ſupporters, a ſeven-headed and ten-horned beaſt, and a ſcarlet whore. The creſt, — on an archi-epiſcopal diadem the

the old dragon ſable, headed, tailed and membred gules, and ſaliant, graſping in his dexter paw a death's head. The device, — that of the right honourable earl Spencer's reverſed, viz. as this nobleman's motto is, 'Dieu defend le droit;' ſo let that of my epiſcopal generals be, Le diable defend le fort.

The blazonry of this eſcutcheon ſhould be accompanied with ſome comments, neceſſary to elucidate its meaning. Theſe perhaps may ſuffice;

The *croſs or* denotes, that the military biſhops, inſtead of 'eſteeming', with the primitive apoſtles, 'all things but loſs for the 'croſs of Chriſt,' chooſe rather to 'make gain' of that croſs; and the circumſtance of its being *embattled* points at their American warfare, ſo expreſsly repugnant to the deſign and end of the meſſiahſhip of Jeſus, which were to bring 'peace 'upon earth.'

The *field purpure* in the firſt quarter alludes to dioceſan epiſcopacy; the *feſſe gules* is the girdle of blood-thirſty proteſtant hierarchy; and the crown with its ſceptre, and the mitre with its croſier, on this feſſe,

being placed upon a line with each other, plainly intimate, in conformity to the addreſs of the convocation, 'that the eccleſiaſtical part of our conſtitution is no leſs 'excellent than the civil, and that they are 'cloſely and intimately blended with each 'other.'

Though I be happy in the reflexion, that epiſcopal and all eccleſiaſtical gentry are, in this country, ſubjected to the controul of the civil magiſtrate; and that the king, conjointly with the two houſes of parliament, is the head of our politically-conſtituted church in temporals; yet, to place the mitre under the crown in this eſcutcheon, would be much too humiliating a circumſtance, even in the eſtimation of thoſe, who profeſs themſelves to be endued with '*all humility*,' — and would controvert the lately-avowed maxim of the convocation, reſpecting the equality of excellence, exhibited in the eccleſiaſtical and civil parts of our conſtitution. In particular, how is it poſſible, that the orthodox-clergy, as they ſtile themſelves, whoſe charity, meekneſs, and 'moderation' are 'known unto all men,' even to a proverb,—and who

ſo

ſo frequently, and, with genuine enthuſiaſtic glee, toaſt '*Church and King*'! and '*the Conſtitution in Church and State!*' — meaning (not the univerſal church of Chriſt, but) the particular hierarchical eſtabliſhment of the church of England; giving, '*in all humility*,' and *modeſty*, the point of precedence to the church, — and thereby inſinuating, that the eccleſiaſtical part of our conſtitution is ſuperior to, and more excellent than, the civil.— How is it poſſible, I ſay, to ſuppoſe, that theſe reverend zealots, who, in their convivial hours, ſeat the church in 'the uppermoſt,' and the king and ſtate in 'the loweſt room,' would, with compoſure, behold the mitre and crozier degraded, in this quarter of the ſhield, below the crown and ſceptre? — The *all-humility* of eccleſiaſtics would, I fear, be inſufficient to ſtand the proof of ſo ſevere a teſt.

For a particular explication of the arms in the ſecond quarter, the acknowledged metropolitan arms of Diotrephes, and of thoſe of his two ſuffragan-biſhops, contained in the third and fourth quarters, I refer my readers to the college of arms, premi-

ſing only theſe three general hypothetical propoſitions; viz. firſt, that by the *pall* in *this* it is declared, that the primacy of a certain kingdom is originally holden in vaſſalage from the pope; — ſecondly, that by the *croſs-ſwords* in *that* is ſignified an intimate union betwixt the ſword of the ſpirit, and the ſword of ſtate;—and, thirdly, that the *croſs-keys* in the *other* imply a ſuppoſedly-delegated power to proteſtant biſhops, equal with that of papal pretended vicars of Chriſt, and ſucceſſors of Peter, to open and ſhut the gates of Heaven and Hell at pleaſure.

For an illuſtration of the meaning of the ſupporters, we muſt apply to the moſt approved commentators on the prophecy of Daniel, and the apocalypſe of John, which laſt interprets the *modeſt* lady riding on the beaſt, as ſhe is there repreſented, to be figurative, in particular, of the arch-antichriſtian church of Rome uſurping the civil power, — and, in general, of every politico-eccleſiaſtical eſtabliſhment, which is, in a greater or leſs degree, armed with that power.

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The *old dragon*, by way of creſt, can mean no other than the quondam-lucifer, now prince of darkneſs. He is pictured *ſable*, to accord with the trite adage among *white* men, 'as *black* as the devil;'—*headed tailed and membered gules*, to intimate, by the ſuppoſed fangs in his head, ſting in his tail, and claws of his members, that he delights in blood; — and *ſaliant on an archiepiſcopal diadem*, to denote, that he is triumphantly dancing for joy on this *moſt reverend* tegument of the head, that he can boaſt of intereſt ſufficient with proteſtant biſhops, to engage them in his cauſe, and to employ them as his inſtruments in his favourite work of death, or the perpetration of a Boſtonian maſſacre, alluded to in the *death's head*, which he *graſps* in his *dexter paw*. —— Death, to ſpeak allegorically, was engendered by the old dragon on the body of ſin, — an inceſtuous embrace! — for Sin is the daughter of Satan, or the adverſary, — an appellative, not undeſervedly beſtowed on the old dragon.

The device to the whole is hieroglyphic of the encouragement which his infernal worſhip gives to this epiſcopo-military tri-

umvirate, to animate them to proceed with intrepidity in their American enterprize,— quaſi diceret, — 'though ye may be all in 'the wrong, yet, my dear good biſhops! 'fear not; I will lead you on to certain 'victory; for le diable defend le fort.'

Having now provided them with a banner, embelliſhed with a curious eſcutcheon, both correſpondent to the occaſion, it ſeems only farther neceſſary to inſinuate, that, as it may be ſuppoſed the forces under their command will conſiſt of cavalry and infantry, both a ſtandard and a pair of colours will be wanting, each to be ornamented with the ſame expreſſive coat of arms. One of them, for the ſake of variety, may diſplay a red, and the other a *black* flag, without a ſpeck of *white* viſible upon it; white being the emblem of innocence, which may be thought not altogether '*intimately blended*' with the American warfare of my epiſcopal generals.

But, to whoſe charge may this ſtandard, and theſe colours, be with ſafety committed, is a point worthy of the moſt ſerious conſideration, and not to be determined on without the utmoſt caution and circumſpection.

ſpection. Who are to be judged truſt-worthy to be employed as cornet and enſign?

Leſt they ſhould be driven to a non-plus in their choice, not from a defect, but from an exceſs, of duly-qualify'd eccleſiaſtics, I will alſo be their friend in this inſtance, and nominate two unexceptionable divines, men of try'd church-fortitude! — who will ſooner die fighting on the field of honour, than ſuffer the ſtandard and colours to be wreſted out of their hands. I am convinced, that my martial biſhops will unanimouſly approve of my recommendation and congé d'elire;—for the objects I mean to propoſe to them, as in every reſpect eligible to be commiſſioned with the cornetcy and enſigncy, are two polemical arch-deacons, 'uti non compoſiti melius cum Bitho 'Bacchius,' if, unfortunately, they were not controverſial gladiators on the ſame ſide of the queſtion.

The one has *ſignalized* himſelf by his *pleas* for ſubſcription to *human* articles of *divine* faith, and therefore may be aptly ſtiled the arch-ſubſcriptioniſt.

The other is not leſs diſtinguiſhed by his filial attachment to his good mother, the church of England, inſtanced in his charge to the clergy, delivered in the courſe of the preceding year, which juſtly entitles him to the epithet of arch-Athanaſian, as it wholly conſiſted of a zealous, and elaborate, but incomprehenſible, and conſequently unſucceſsful attempt, to juſtify, and explicate, the unjuſtifiable, and inexplicable, doctrine of the creed ſo denominated,—and to apologize for the denunciation of the anti-chriſtian anathemas, with which its fallible compiler enforces the belief of it.

This puiſſant champion of Athanaſianiſm *hiſce oculis vidi, hiſce auribus audivi.* Probably, his charge was implicitly received, as the oracle of goſpel truth, by ſundry of his ſurrounding clerical auditors. On me indeed, whoſe faith exceeds not in quantity a grain of muſtard-ſeed, his learned labour was unprofitably beſtowed,—and of whom it may be literally ſaid, the *faithful* arch-deacon talked to a *ſtone*. But he then deferred finiſhing his myſterious diſquiſition, propoſing to reſume the ſubject

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at his next viſitation, during the current year;—when, 'O grief of griefs!' I was neceſſitated by an untoward concurrence of circumſtances, which has removed me to a diſtant part of the kingdom, to deprive myſelf of the opportunity of confronting him, as uſual, —and imbibing, *arrectis auribus, narrantis ab ore*, if but little of *utile*, at leaſt much of *dulce*, from the expected continuation of his curious vindication of the favourite-ſymbol of his faith;—a continuation! which, I confidently venture to pronounce, has proved to be upon a par with the commencement, and not to be equalled, but by the concluſion. The one whole of his viſitatorial compoſition cannot but be in perfect uniſon with the maxim of Horace;

'Primo ne medium, medio ne diſcrepet imum;'

Which, moreover, muſt neceſſarily be tripartite, in order to bear an exact conformity to the doctrine diſcuſſed, viz. the trinity in unity;—that ſo the truly reſpectable archidiaconal pericranium may, at length, after a triennial travel in pain, to be computed from the firſt conception to the final deliyery, (which is more than triple the time

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of reckoning in any female animal,) give birth, by the obſtetrical aid of the old men-midwives of the Alexandrian ſchool, to a full-formed tri-une fœtus.

Theſe metaphyſical ſophiſts, the fathers, as they are ſtiled, miſtook the triad, or the three celeſtial principles of Plato, goodneſs, mind, and ſpirit, (or ἡ ψυχη τȣ κοσμȣ, the ſoul of the world) which, it is ſaid, that philoſopher maintained, and aſcribed to το ον, or the ſupreme being, for three diſtinct divine agents; and wreſted evangelic truth and ſimplicity to a co-incidence with their own philoſophic miſconceptions. Thus they occaſioned, by an unnatural jumble of platoniſm and chriſtianity, (both equally miſunderſtood) the introduction of the groſſeſt inconſiſtencies and contradictions into thoſe plain unſophiſticated ideas of the Deity, that is, of 'the one God and Father of all,' which unperverted natural, and uncorrupted revealed, religion jointly inculcate. As Plato's maſter, Socrates, had ſuffered death at Athens, on account of his unreſerved acknowledgement and worſhip of the one, only true God, in oppoſition to the eſtabliſhed polytheiſm of his country-

countrymen, it is probable, that his diſciple, Plato, through fear of the ſame fate, might expreſs himſelf cautiouſly, and rather ambiguouſly, in reſpect to this grand fundamental truth. Hence his followers erroneouſly perſonified his three celeſtial principles, conſtituting the firſt, viz. τ'αγαθον, or goodneſs, αυτο ον, or the ſupreme and ſelf-exiſtent being;—the ſecond, ὁ νες, or mind, the Δημιυργος, or Creator of the univerſe, but ſubordinate to, and dependent on the former; — and the third, ſpirit (or ἡ ψυχη τε κοσμε, the ſoul of the world) the prince of thoſe innumerable inviſible ſpirits, which they ſtiled Eons, and ſuppoſed that they preſided over the affairs of men, thereby giving birth to the doctrine of dæmons, or ghoſts;—a philoſophical hypotheſis, which has long diſgraced the church of Chriſt, agreeably to the prediction of Paul, 'that, in the later times, ſome ſhall 'depart from the faith, giving heed to ſe-'ducing ſpirits, and doctrines of devils,' or dæmons. The ſame great apoſtle expreſsly charges his Coloſſian converts to 'beware, leſt any man ſpoil you, through 'philoſophy, and vain deceit, after the tra-

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'dition of men, after the elements of the 'world, and not after Chriſt.'

This laſt divine agent of their own creation, they aſſerted, was inferior to the other two. Afterwards, thoſe platoniſts, who embraced the chriſtian faith, and the glorious hope of an happy immortality annexed to the practice of chriſtian morality, wiſhing to eſtabliſh a perfect harmony betwixt their own philoſophic ſyſtem, and the chriſtian theology, found no difficulty, accuſtomed as they were to metaphyſical ingenuity, in making 'Father, Son, and 'holy Spirit,' reſpectively anſwerable to their perſonify'd goodneſs, mind, and ſpirit.

But, it being foreign to my deſign in this publication, to diſcuſs the diverſities of opinion in points of faith among chriſtians; in a future work I intend (modò vita, valetudo, otiumque ſuperſint) to expoſe, with unreſtrained freedom, the abſurdity of that trinitarian hypotheſis, which is uſually ſtiled the Arian, but, by a late learned and laborious vindicator of it, the Apollinarian, from Apollinaris, its ſuppoſed, or real founder,—a man as credulous and fanciful, as Tertullian himſelf. Of the implicit faith of

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Apollinaris, and Tertullian, in forged miracles, their eaſy belief of the ſtory of the thundering legion, in the army of Marcus Antoninus, is proof abundant.

But, not to heap digreſſion on digreſſion, it is ſufficient for my preſent purpoſe to remark, that this trinitarian hypotheſis, however denominated,—as one metaphyſical abſurdity uſually produces another and another, in an endleſs progreſſion, till the ſimple truths of God are abſorbed in the complex falſhoods of man, introduced, in proceſs of time, that maſter-piece of *deifying* jargon, the Athanaſian Trinity; — of which doctrine the defence (indefenſible though it be) its aforeſaid doughty champion deems a proper ſubject of his viſitatorial charges to the clergy of his archdeaconry.

Having now procured for my prelatical heroes an undeniably-ſuitable cornet and enſign, I ought to beſtow a word on the nature and quality of the martial muſic, proper on this extraordinary occaſion. To improve upon the alluſion preſerved in their motley dreſs, and in the coat of arms propoſed to be pourtrayed on their ſtandard

and

and colours, to the preceding poſitions in their late addreſs of the convocation to his majeſty, 'that the eccleſiaſtical part of our 'conſtitution is no leſs excellent than the 'civil, and that they are cloſely and inti-'mately blended with each other,' it is requiſite, this ſhould be equally compoſed of thoſe jarring inſtruments, the ſacred ſoul-inſpiring organ, and the profane ſpirit-ſtirring drum.

Their martial muſic then thus duly tempered, I would wiſh, in the next place, from the ſame principle of an unfeigned *regard* for ſpiritual Lords, which has actuated me throughout, to uſe all prudential precautions to guard my military biſhops againſt the poſſibility of a defeat; which, as I have taken true pains to ſuitably equip them for their American expedition, would be a diſaſtrous event, little leſs diſgraceful to me, than to them. As the moſt effectual expedient, therefore, which can be adopted, to avoid the ſhame of a defeat, and inſure ſucceſs againſt the *rebellious* Boſtonians, I recommend to them the appointment of a corps-de-reſerve, conſiſting of ſelect companies draughted from the

the different regiments of anti-petitioners, who well deſerve to be ſtiled the gens d' armes, and life-guards, of the church,— and commanded by that renowned arch-anti-petitioner, a certain political and commercial dean. He, if, by any miſchance, the main body of their army ſhould be overpowered, and put to flight, and victory incline to favour the enemy, may, by a ſeaſonable advance with his freſh and valiant reinforcement, ſuccour the diſordered troops, and, by giving them time to rally, and return to the charge with redoubled ardour, compel the fickle goddeſs to change ſides, — and, in the upſhot, with the reſounding plaudit of her wings, declare the church militant triumphant.

To this dernier reſort lodged with his deanſhip, ſo neceſſary to the inſurance of ſucceſs, it ſeems farther neceſſary to add, as the laſt convincing teſtimony of my undiſſembled *eſteem* for the epiſcopo-military triumvirate, that they ſhould be careful to provide themſelves with a journaliſt, to faithfully record the glorious atchievements of a ſucceſsful campaign. This is the more neceſſary, as it is not to be preſumed that the

the epiſcopal generals will be able, amidſt the din of arms, to compoſe their thoughts ſo, as to write, like Cæſar, commentaries on their own wars. I judge, therefore, they will not object to my recommendation of a celebrated lexicographer, as their fitteſt aſſociate for this purpoſe. This rigid epiſcopalian, who is ſo well affected to the eſtabliſhed church, that he can weep over the ſcattered materials of its ruined edifices, will do ſuch juſtice to the importance of the ſubject by his turgid verboſity of ſtile, as that the luſtre of their American exploits ſhall acquire an addition of ſplendour, from the inimitably-deſcriptive point of view in which he will not fail to place them.

It is recorded of Alexander, and the warrior Pyrrhus, king of Epirus, that they envied Achilles the happineſs, of having his name and exploits immortalized by the poet, Homer. But in the epiſcopal heroes, the unparalleled literary abilities of their friend and ſecretary, the Rambler, will preclude all occaſion of envy in this reſpect. Moreover, it cannot be doubted, that he, who, as a political writer, has clearly

clearly demonſtrated to all thoſe who are capable of ſeeing the demonſtration, that, 'taxation,' without popular repreſentation, is 'no tyranny,' will, with the ſame happy ingenuity, embelliſh his journal with the occaſional interſperſion of arguments to prove, that dioceſan biſhops are no anti-chriſts, — and that religious, and every other branch of civil or ſocial, liberty, are no parts of Chriſt's excellent ſyſtem of morality.

Having now completely furniſhed my military biſhops with all neceſſaries, adapted to their American expedition, I adviſe them to embark, without delay, on board the *Cerberus*-frigate, which tranſported the three generals in the ſpring, in preference to any other ſhip of war, for a reaſon, which muſt occur to every one, who is, in the leaſt degree, converſant with the heathen mythology. To thoſe who are totally unacquainted with it, it will be ſufficient to intimate, that Cerberus was feigned to be a *triple*-headed (O the faſcinating number three!) Hell-hound, and *Janitor orci*, or, in plain Engliſh, the porter of Hell;—and a very watchful houſe-dog he was. My

barking Pompey, who, in theſe burglarious times, guards, with more than human faithfulneſs, his maſter's wooden tenement againſt the aſſaults of midnight-robbers and aſſaſſins, is a more yelping cur, when compared with this celebrated infernal maſtiff.

Wiſhing then my epiſcopal triumvirate a voyage of ſafety in the Cerberus, proportioned to their peculiar deſerts in the houſe of Peers; I ſhall proceed to detect the crafty attempt of the bench of biſhops in general, to defeat the aforeſaid, or any ſimilar, and more finiſhed, project of reformation of the church of England, which is viſible in their indirect intimation, contained in the addreſs of the convocation to the king, that his majeſty is bound to ſupport the preſent corrupt eccleſiaſtical ſyſtem, as by law eſtabliſhed, in virtue of his coronation oath, as though that compelled him to perpetuate it, and precluded him from giving his aſſent to any act of parliament, ſpecifying an amendment of it;—and as though his original coronation-oath would not then be equally binding to protect the church of England altered by law,

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as it is to preſerve it, as now eſtabliſhed by law, till a legal change in its conſtitution take place. Their ſpiritual Lordſhips are groſsly miſtaken, if they mean to deceive the legiſlature into an opinion, that the laws, which injoin the preſent church-eſtabliſhment, are unalterable, like thoſe of the antient Medes and Perſians.

They may laugh, now, but perhaps will ſhortly weep. I want not the divine gift of prophecy to foretel, human foreſight being ſufficient to enable me to prognoſticate, that, as the event of an unnatural war (to which they have collectively given their public ſanction) between the mother and her children, will be impoveriſhment to the former, particularly, by annihilating the moſt eſſential branch of her commerce; adminiſtration may be driven, through the conſequent failure of the reſources of ſupply, ariſing from the cuſtomary duties on American exports and imports, to the neceſſity of doubling and multiplying taxes, already too numerous and burthenſome. A fatal expedient this!—of which the miſeries cannot better be averted, than by a national petition of all ranks of men to

parliament, to ſubſtitute, in lieu of ſo deſtructive a meaſure, the ſeizure of the lands, tithes, and other poſſeſſions and revenues, of the church,—and, in order to avoid an unjuſtifiable invaſion of private property, to give legiſlative ſecurity for an equivalent income, for life, to their preſent poſſeſſors.

Thus, however the Lords-biſhops, and their ſubordinate dignitaries, may labour to prop up the tottering citadel of dioceſan epiſcopacy; however they may intrench, and fortify themſelves within the ramparts of their hitherto impregnable church-eſtabliſhment;—however they may ridicule the enterprize of ſuppreſſing ſpiritual baronies, as Quixotical and impracticable; — yet, if I err not in diſcerning the ſigns of the times, the ſeaſon ſeems to be approaching, when the ſuppreſſion of them will be deemed eligible, and prove practicable, — the ramparts be ſcaled,—and the citadel levelled with the ground.

What a glorious æra will this bleſt event form in the annals of England! Happily, the people are even now ripe for an abolition of tithes;—tithes!—a mode of clerical proviſion, which adminiſters a perpetual ſource

ſource of ſtrife betwixt a pariſh and its parſon; — who is thereby, in a great degree, incapacitated as a miniſter of the goſpel of peace,—the ſpiritual huſbandman, and the man of God; being neceſſitated to commence the temporal farmer, and the man of the world. The anti-tithe ſociety in London, and their unſucceſsful petition to the late Houſe of Commons, are convincing proofs of their diſpoſition to welcome an amendment of our conſtitution in church.

Whenever then the legiſlature ſhall be diſpoſed to ſecond the views of the people, by granting them this earneſtly expected felicity; it is not to be doubted, that the legiſlature, if they ſhould condeſcend to think the preceding propoſed plan of church-reformation worthy of their conſideration, at the ſame time will, from the motive of common humanity, allot a ſalary of not leſs,—and, from a principle of ſound policy, of not more, than two hundred pounds per annum, free from deductions of every kind, to every parochial paſtor. If the governors and governed, of this chriſtian nation be determined to main-

tain ſome civil eſtabliſhment in religion, the imprudence of beſtowing on the miniſters of ſuch eſtabliſhment grandeur and affluence will inſtantly occur to the ſoundneſs of their underſtandings; — and the cruelty of omitting to give them a competent ſtipendiary proviſion (which, in theſe expenſive times, ought to amount to two hundred pounds per annum each) will feelingly affect the goodneſs of their hearts.

I have already hinted my ſentiments of the natural non-neceſſity, and the evangelic unlawfulneſs, of civil eſtabliſhments in religion; Chriſt, who has ſtrictly injoined obedience to the civil magiſtrate, in all juſt matters relating to his political department, having, at the ſame time, not delegated to him any authority in the management of religious concerns, which is his own peculiar unparticipated province.

If Chriſt, who could not but foreſee national converſions to his religion, had intended, that, in conſequence thereof, civil magiſtrates ſhould participate of the government of his ſpiritual kingdom; — ſuperadd their own articles of faith, and forms of prayer, to his doctrines,—or con-

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found, and perplex, their intelligible ſimplicity by their own incomprehenſible interpretations of them; — bind an aſſent to the truth of theſe upon the conſcience by ſubſcription; — hire a ſet of men, to publicly preach their ſyſtem of divinity, and pronounce their liturgy; — and, particularly, inveſt a ſuperior order of theſe their miniſters with a ſhare in political legiſlation; — he would, certainly, have made ample proviſion, — given expreſs directions, — and delegated a competent authority in his goſpel, for theſe ſeveral purpoſes; — would have ſpecified the exact proportion of temporal dominion, and of civil power, to be allotted to eccleſiaſtics; — and, in ſhort, would have preciſely defined the extent of what is artfully termed, by Lords ſpiritual, '*the alliance betwixt church and ſtate.*'

But, as Chriſt has obſerved, unfortunately for them, a profound ſilence, in reſpect to theſe points; ſtateſmen and churchmen are not only wiſe beyond what is written, but inſinuate, that the goſpel of Chriſt is imperfect and defective, if they preſume to furniſh it with ſupplements of their own invention; — not to mention, that politico-

eccleſiaſtical conſtitutions are virtually prohibited in the apoſtle's expreſs renunciation of 'dominion over the faith' of his converts, and, conſequently, that every earthly potentate, whether he be a civil ruler, or a ſpiritual Lord, is unable to produce a divine, which alone is a competent, authority and commiſſion, to frame, and enforce a conformity to them.

It is remarkable, that Gallio, the deputy, or Roman proconſul, of Achaia, at the time of Paul's preaching at Corinth, though an heathen, had a clear inſight into this truth; — viz. that it is foreign to the office of the civil magiſtrate, to interpoſe his authority in the adjuſtment of religious opinions and diſputes. This wiſe man acted agreeably to conviction;—and of his conduct in this point, worthy of the imitation of the civil magiſtrate, in every age and country, I ſhall tranſcribe the whole, as I find it recorded in Acts xviii. 12—17.

'And, when Gallio was the deputy of 'Achaia, the Jews made inſurrection, 'with one accord, againſt Paul, and 'brought him to the judgment-ſeat, ſay-'ing,'—"This fellow perſuadeth men to

"worſhip

" worſhip God contrary to the law." — ' And, when Paul was now about to open ' his mouth, Gallio ſaid unto the Jews,'— " if it were a matter of wrong, or wick- " ed lewdneſs, O ye Jews! reaſon would, " that I ſhould bear with you: — but, if " it be a queſtion of words and names, and " of your law, look ye to it;—for I will " be no judge of ſuch matters." ' And ' he drove them from the judgment-ſeat. ' Then all the Greeks took Soſthenes, the ' chief ruler of the ſynagogue, and beat ' him before the judgment-ſeat; and Gal- ' lio cared for none of thoſe things.'

' A matter of wrong, or wicked lewd- ' neſs,' being a civil crime, would, as Gallio rightly intimated, have neceſſarily come under his cognizance, as proconſul;—but, with reſpect to ' a queſtion of words and names, and of' the religious ' law' of the Jews, he, a good and diſcreet magiſtrate, refuſed to be ' judge of ſuch matters,' and ' cared for none of thoſe things,' as being extra-provincial, or points not appertaining to his civil department. Thus the civil magiſtrate, in our own country, ought to act

act on a ſimilar tumult, from whom the Αρχισυναγωγος would have been intituled to receive, in judgment, damages for his ſound drubbing, if he had thought proper to bring an action of aſſault and battery againſt his adverſaries, in Weſtminſter-hall.

Again; — when the chief captain, Claudius Lyſias, reſcuing Paul out of the hands of the enraged Jews of Jeruſalem, ſends him to Cæſarea, the reſidence of Felix, the Roman procurator of Judea, he writes to Felix after this manner: "Whom" (Paul) "I perceived to be accuſed of queſ-"tions of their law, but to have nothing "laid to his charge worthy of death, or "of bonds;" (Acts xxiii. 29.) plainly intimating, that ſuch queſtions were not objects of civil deciſion. Felix probably is of the ſame opinion, as he never brings Paul to a regular trial before him; — but, being a mercenary and corrupt judge, unjuſtly detains him in cuſtody, in hopes, (Acts xxiv. 26) "that money ſhould have "been given him of Paul, that he might "looſe him;" who, he thought, would have been glad to have purchaſed his liberty. However, being diſappointed, and,

(ver.

(ver. 27.) "after two years," ſucceeded in the procuratorſhip by "Portius Feſtus," he, "willing to ſhew the Jews a pleaſure, "left Paul bound." This was one of the many inſtances of male-adminiſtration in Felix; — for, in ſo doing, he invaded the civil rights of Paul, who, being a citizen of Rome, ought not to have been bound unheard, and uncondemned.

His ſucceſſor, Feſtus, at firſt, 'doubted 'of ſuch manner of queſtions,' (Acts xxv. 20.) or, according to the marginal reading, which ſeems more fully to convey the ſenſe of the Greek original, 'was 'doubtful how to enquire hereof;' — but, after his conference with king Agrippa, was clearly of opinion with him, that, as Paul had not committed a civil crime, 'this man doth nothing worthy of death, 'or of bonds.' Then ſaid Agrippa unto 'Feſtus,' "This man might have been ſet "at liberty, if he had not appealed unto "Cæſar." (Acts xxvi. 31 and 32.)

Theſe words of Agrippa amount to a virtual declaration, that the civil power is unauthorized to interpoſe in matters merely religious. But, as Paul had appealed to the

the tribunal where the emperor preſided in perſon, which was the higheſt court of judicature among the Romans, to whom the Jews were then ſubject, Feſtus " determined to ſend him thither;" (Acts xxv. 25.) and thereby became ignorantly inſtrumental to the fulfilment of the prediction, which Paul had received, by expreſs revelation, from Chriſt himſelf, that, " as " thou haſt teſtified of me in Jeruſalem, " ſo muſt thou bear witneſs alſo at Rome." (Acts xxiii. 11.)

In reſpect to eccleſiaſtical authority, Paul had before expreſsly diſclaimed the lawfulneſs of the Jewiſh *ſpiritual court* of judicature, in a reply to Feſtus; — who, like Felix, knew how to temporize. ' Feſtus, willing to do the Jews a pleaſure, ' anſwered Paul, and ſaid,'—" Wilt thou " go up to Jeruſalem, and there be judg- " ed of theſe things before me?"—' Then ' ſaid Paul,' — " I ſtand at Cæſar's judg- " ment-ſeat, where I ought to be judged:— " To the Jews have I done no wrong, as " thou very well knoweſt; — for, if I be " an offender, or have committed any " thing worthy of death, I refuſe not to " die. But, if there be none of theſe

" things,

" things, whereof theſe accuſe me, *no man*
" *may deliver me unto them.* I appeal unto
" Cæſar." (Acts xxv. 9, 10, 11.)

This abſolute refuſal then of Paul to be delivered up to the Sanhedrim, or *ſpiritual court* of the Jews, which he avoided by his appeal to Cæſar,—the words of Lyſias, Feſtus, and Agrippa, and particularly the conduct of Gallio, are, in my judgment, irrefragable arguments againſt all human power and authority in the eſtabliſhment of religious ſyſtems,—much more, in the enforcement of a compliance with them by rigorous penal laws. The exertion of all ſuch power and authority, whether uſurped by eccleſiaſtics, — deputed to them by the civil magiſtrate,—or exerciſed by him in perſon,—is a direct invaſion of the province of Chriſt, — who having not delegated to his pretended Roman vicar, nor to any other man, or ſet of men, his rights, privileges, and power, ought to be permitted to reign unmoleſted, as I before obſerved, ſole king in his own ſpiritual kingdom, given him by God.

However, as in England, notwithſtanding theſe expreſs ſcripture examples to the contrary,

contrary, (to which may be added the poſitive teſtimony of our Saviour himſelf, — "Render unto Cæſar the things which are "Cæſar's, and unto God the things which "are God's,"—wherein he keeps politics and religion diſtinct and ſeparate) the public in general, and the legiſlature in particular, ſeem to be convinced, that they have both a natural, and a revealed, right to interfere in the management of affairs ſtrictly ſpiritual, in which, in fact, God, Chriſt, and a man's own conſcience, are alone concerned;—and to form a civil eſtabliſhment in religion, it is evident, they would not only not be culpable, but juſtifiable, in acting agreeably to ſuch conviction.

I have therefore preſumed to lay before them a plan of a conſtitution in church, which, I hope, will be deemed more evangelically perfect, than the preſent. In ſo doing, I have endeavoured to diſcharge my two-fold duty, as a patriot, and as a Chriſtian; or, rather, the one included in the other, patriotiſm being a branch, and an eſſential branch, of Chriſtian morality: — conſequently, apprehend, as I alſo profeſs to act from conviction, I (egotiſt as I am) ſhall

ſhall not be judged totally undeſerving of the approbation of every good man, both in public and in private life.

That I may not be liable to be miſunderſtood in the minuteſt article, it will not be improper to recapitulate, and place in one point of view, the ſeveral particulars of this plan;—which muſt neceſſarily be preceded by an act of parliament, directing the total ſubverſion of the preſent eccleſiaſtical part of our conſtitution.

This would comprehend in ſpirituals, the removal of ſubſcription to the thirty-nine articles and liturgy, and the extirpation of our clerical ſyſtem, root and branch, from the *reſpectable* elevated degree of an opulent arch-biſhop, (a ſtation much too exalted and affluent for any miniſter of the goſpel) through every ſubordinate rank of clergy, down to the *deſ ic bl.* depreſſed order of an impoveriſhed curate,—which, to the diſgrace, as well of humanity as of chriſtianity, is very numerous.

In temporals it would include,

Firſt, The annihilation of the *ſpiritual* baronies of the church, and of that other impolitic

impolitic civil privilege, the clerical right of ſuffrage at the election of the commons.

Secondly, The reſumption of the grant of church-lands.

Thirdly, The purchaſe of the right of private and corporate patronage, on fixed and equitable terms, to be adjuſted by the reſpective value of the preferment.

Fourthly, The abolition of tithes, and the ſuppreſſion of the preſent church poſſeſſions and revenues of every kind, — in which are neceſſarily comprized the archiepiſcopal profits, accrueing from the uſurped power of granting marriage-licences, divorces, and teſtamentary probates, and of determining ſuch like cauſes; which are the undoubted and natural, and, conſequently, ought to be the unalienable, right of the civil part of our conſtitution.

Fifthly, The ſeizure of the fund ariſing from the firſt-fruits and tenths, eſtabliſhed, in the reign of Anne, for the augmentation of ſmall livings.

Sixthly and laſtly, the ſole appropriation of this fund, and of every ſpecies of church-poſſeſſion and revenue, including the produce of the ſale of the glebes,—of all the

other

other lands, — of the houſes, and of the *great* tithes, of the church (which ſeveral articles muſt amount to an immenſe ſum) to the immediate diſcharge of the national debt.

N. B. In ſpeaking of the ſale of tithes, I inſiſt only on the *great* tithes;—becauſe, as it is propoſed that the public ſhould be taxed for the maintenance of the parochial biſhops or paſtors, it is juſt and reaſonable, that the public ſhould enjoy the benefit of the ſuppreſſion of the *ſmall* tithes, without making any pecuniary compenſation to government for ſuch ſuppreſſion.

The ſale of the great tithes may be regulated in manner following, viz. in rectorial pariſhes, where the tenth part of the produce of the land at preſent belongs to the parſon, let every man become the purchaſer of the tenth part of the produce of his own landed eſtate, on equitable parliamentary terms, and pay the purchaſe-money to government, at four half yearly inſtalments.

Theſe are the heads of that part of my plan which relates to the demolition of the old,—the particulars reſpecting the e-

rection of the new, eccleſiaſtical edifice, are as follow, viz.

The ſame act of parliament, injoining,

Firſt, Every rank of beneficed clergymen to deliver in, upon oath, or a ſolemn aſſeveration, the full amount of the clear yearly value of their ſuppreſt church revenues;

Secondly, The payment of annual penſions, *durante vitâ*, to the preſent hierarchs, the ſubordinate dignitaries, and all ſine-cure beneficed clergymen, (though their various orders be ſuppreſt) to the amount of their annihilated church-incomes;

Thirdly, The eſtabliſhment of parochial, on the ruins of dioceſan epiſcopacy,—that is, the appointment of one equal and only order of miniſters of the goſpel, throughout England and Wales, under the new title of parochial biſhops, or paſtors, with an equality of maintenance, ariſing from the ſtipend of two hundred pounds per annum each, to be ſecured by the legiſlature, levied by tax on the public, and paid by the crown;—which, on fixing the number of parochial paſtors at eleven thouſand, will require

require an annual charge of two millions and two hundred thouſand pounds;

Fourthly, The continuance of the preſent rectors, vicars, and, in ſhort, all clergymen to whoſe benefices is annexed the cure of ſouls, under the new denomination of parochial paſtors, with the appointment of a ſalary of two hundred pounds per annum each, if their ſuppreſt preferment fell ſhort of that ſum; — and with the enjoyment of the full amount of its former clear yearly value, if it exceeded that ſum; — but at their deaths their parochial biſhoprics to be reduced to the ſtandard-ſalary of two hundred pounds per annum.

Fifthly, The appointment of the preſent race of curates, according to their ſeniority in the church, to vacant parochial biſhoprics,—and the maintenance of them, at one hundred pounds per annum each, at the public expence, till they be thus gradually provided for;

Sixthly, The eſtabliſhment of the future perpetual ſucceſſion to parochial biſhoprics, by alternate academical ſeniority at Oxford and Cambridge, accompanied with the requiſition of the following qualifications,

previous to admiſſion to the paſtoral charge, viz. 1. A collegiate-teſtimonial of good behaviour, during the laſt three years, ſigned by the head, and the ſix ſenior reſident members, of the college.; — 2. An examination of the paſtoral candidate in the Hebrew and Greek of the ſacred writings by three paſtors, whoſe parochial biſhoprics are adjoining to the vacant biſhopric, and who ſhould be required to jointly and gratuitouſly officiate therein, during the vavancy, which ought to be filled, without unneceſſary delay ;— 3. The religious ſubſcription to the two poſitions contained in page 32 — 33 of this work; — 4. The additional civil ſubſcription to the public peruſal of the preſent, (the Athanaſian creed excluded) or any, ſtate liturgy, leſs generally exceptionable ; — and, 5. The oaths of allegiance and ſupremacy; — or, in lieu thereof, the ſolemn aſſeveration of the Quakers, for reaſons ſpecified in the former part of this pamphlet.

(N. B. The three examining paſtors ſhould be injoined to tranſmit a teſtimonial, ſigned with their names, of the competent knowledge of the examined paſtor elect in the

the Hebrew and Greek ſcriptures, together with his collegiate-teſtimonial, — two-fold ſubſcription, — and ſubſcribed civil abjuration, to proper perſons authorized by government to receive, and regiſter, the ſame.)

Seventhly, The nearly equal apportionment of the paſtoral charge, by proportioning the number of paſtors to the extent and populouſneſs of the pariſhes. For this purpoſe, though, in general, there will be an allotment of but one paſtor to one pariſh, yet, in the particular caſes, of populous and extenſive pariſhes, it will be neceſſary to aſſign more than one parochial paſtor; — as, on the other hand, one ſuch paſtor will be ſufficient for the charge of two, or even three, ſmall and thinly inhabited pariſhes. In order to aſcertain, and ſettle, the proportion of the number of paſtors to the ſize, and populouſneſs, of the pariſhes, every pariſh ſhould be required to give in an eſtimate of the number of its acres, houſe-keepers, and poor.

Eighthly, and laſtly; The change of the ſpiritual court into a common-law-court, in all cauſes of a civil nature, accompanied with the total ſuppreſſion of proſecutions

on the ſcore of a free declaration of opinion in points of faith.—For what friend to the natural rights of mankind would heſitate to prefer the equitable legal ſyſtem of our Saxon king, Alfred, to the arbitrary judicial code of the Roman emperor, Juſtinian?—which laſt forms the baſis of what is called our civil, and canon, law.

This plan of an entire alteration, and amendment, of our conſtitution in church, I humbly and reſpectfully ſubmit to the goodneſs and wiſdom of our king and parliament, to be by them corrected, improved, and perfected; — for, I am not poſſeſt of ſo intolerable a portion of vanity and ſelf-ſufficiency, as not to diſcern, that it is capable of receiving ſalutary additions, and emendations, from their wiſe and public-ſpirited councils. Imperfect as it is, it has theſe conſiderable advantages attending it;—namely, firſt, the preſent unſcriptural, and diotrephian, pre-eminence and ſubordination among the miniſters of the goſpel, would be abſorbed in the one equal order of parochial biſhops, or paſtors; — and, ſecondly, theſe paſtors would not be politicians, as, unhappily, clergymen in general,

neral, and hierarchs in particular, now are, and muſt almoſt unavoidably be, in conſequence of the preſent church-ſyſtem.

All cloſe and intimate, but unnatural, union of religion and politics in ſpiritual lords being in this caſe diſſolved, by the ſuppreſſion of that high order of clergy together with the reſt; theſe new parochial biſhops would have no farther concern with government, than merely to yield obedience to the laws of their country in civil affairs, in common with other loyal ſubjects. Nor would they enjoy excluſive immunities, or privileges, as churchmen; their future right of ſuffrage at the election of the commons being, according to this reformed eccleſiaſtical plan, entirely detached from their evangelical profeſſion, and made to depend ſolely on their poſſeſſion of private freehold eſtates, &c. which of courſe would entitle them to a vote. Thus would not they, who ought to remain fixed on the *terra-firma* of religion, be 'led,' as they now are, 'into temptation, but be de-'livered from evil,'—the evil of embarking on the unſettled ſea of politics.

I ſhall only farther obſerve, that, though the immediate ſeizure of church-lands, tithes, houſes, poſſeſſions of every kind, and every ſpecies of its revenue, be propoſed to take place; yet, as the dignified and fine-cure clergy, (among whom I include dioceſan biſhops) and thoſe whoſe benefices, attended with the cure of ſouls, exceed in value the ſalary of two hundred pounds per annum, deſigned to be annexed to every parochial biſhopric, will be penſioned for life, to the amount of their ſuppreſt church-incomes; — this plan of parochial epiſcopacy would be peaceably and ſatisfactorily, gradually and mildly, executed, and not inſtantaneouſly and tyrannically;—as it would be in the inſtance of diſpoſſeſſing any one occupier of church-preferment of his property, without giving him, for life, the equivalent of his former revenue.

The objection to which this, or any, plan of an amendment of our conſtitution in church, ſimilar to, or perfective of, it, is liable from the conſideration, that the right of patronage is, in many inſtances, veſted in individuals,—in the univerſities,—

and

and in various lay-bodies corporate, I have ſufficiently obviated, by propoſing a parliamentary purchaſe of this right, whether it be that of limited, or alternate, preſentation, or of perpetual advowſon, on equitable terms;—by which I mean terms proportioned to the reſpective value of the preferment in their gift. It ſurely cannot be a hardſhip, to receive an adequate pecuniary compenſation for the ſale of that right to government, which is ſo neceſſary to the accompliſhment of this new arrangement of eccleſiaſtical concerns; — an arrangement, productive, as it muſt neceſſarily be, of many beneficial conſequences to this nation, whether it be viewed in a religious, or in a political, light.

If the civil eſtabliſhments in religion of every chriſtian country were to undergo a ſimilar reformation,—and the affairs of the kingdoms of this world, and thoſe of the kingdom of Chriſt, were thus to be kept as diſtinct and ſeparate as they were originally deſigned to be; it would prove the moſt effectual human means to introduce that bleſſed ſcene of things, when 'the king-
'doms of this world ſhall become the
'king-

'kingdoms of our Lord and of his Chriſt,' by previouſly introducing a wiſe political inſtitution, intimated in the title page of this pamphlet as preferable to, and perfective of, the aforeſaid plan of reformation of our conſtitution in church,—and which I ſhall now briefly deſcribe.

When the ſalutary effects of this entire ſubverſion, and renovation, of our national church-eſtabliſhment, ſhall have ſenſibly operated, as they probably will, in ſome meaſure, immediately, and in a degree increaſing from year to year; — when experimental conviction ſhall irreſiſtibly impel my countrymen to joyfully acknowledge, that the propoſed reformation of our conſtitution in church is not only not detrimental, but greatly beneficial, to our conſtitution in ſtate, and equally conducive to national welfare; — when the minds of men ſhall be thus prepared to perceive, that the power of the civil magiſtrate extends not to matters merely religious, — and that he is unauthorized by God, or by Chriſt, to form any national eſtabliſhment in religion,—or to enjoin, with or without penal ſanctions, even the uſe of a liturgy, compoſed

poſed by fallible men, much leſs to require ſubſcription to the truth of its contents ;— then will be the time to improve upon this reformation.

The improvement which, *in all humility* (the faſhionable right-reverend phraſe) I propoſe, may be effected in manner following, viz.

In this caſe, let even the aforeſaid reformation of our eccleſiaſtical eſtabliſhment, however experimentally beneficial it cannot but prove, be deſtroyed ;—the parochial biſhoprics in their turn ſuppreſſed, their incumbents being permitted to retire with the continuance of their ſalaries for life ; --- in ſhort, civil eſtabliſhments in religion of every kind renounced, — and in lieu thereof a wiſe political inſtitution ſubſtituted, conſiſting merely of two ſimple articles, viz.

Firſt, A parliamentary injunction of the obſervance of a day of ſabbath, or reſt, on the ſeventh day of the week, throughout England and Wales ;—leaving every individual, who is not aſhamed of a ſenſe of religion, at liberty to compoſe his thoughts to ſerious meditation, — and to worſhip God according to his conſcience,

with,

with, or without, a form of prayer, — and either in private, — in company with his own family,—or ſtill more in public, by aſſociating with his neighbours for that good purpoſe, if he and they can agree.

Secondly, A parliamentary erection of charity-ſchools, at proper diſtances, throughout the ſaid kingdom and principality, to be maintained at the public expence, — to the intent, that the children of the poor, from the age of five to that of fourteen, may be univerſally inſtructed to read the Bible in their mother-tongue; — and that, in like manner, as men are now taught to become 'every man his own gardener, law-'yer, phyſician,' and politician, they may be thus qualified, at years of diſcretion, to become every man his own divine.

The education, and guardianſhip of the morals, of the infant-poor, are not merely a religious, but a political, concern;—for, how can they behave as good citizens, who, being *literally illiterate*, are incapacitated for becoming good chriſtians? Theſe ſchools ſhould alſo be ſchools of induſtry, which is the grand preſervative of morals, wherein children ſhould be habituated to manual

manual and domeſtic employments, proportioned to their tender years; and the pecuniary produce of the work of the little labourers of both ſexes, applied towards defraying the expence of apprenticing the boys to handicraft-trades, and the girls to ſuitable feminine occupations.

Theſe ſchools too might, ſubject to wiſe and proper regulations, prove the beſt regiſter-offices for ſervants; — whoſe indolence and eye-ſervice, ſo generally lamented in families, certainly originate in the criminal neglect of their education.

Laſtly, they might be made to ſerve as excellent nurſeries, for ſupplying the army with ſoldiers, and the navy with ſeamen.— In this laſt particular, I cannot but applaud the attention of the public-ſpirited magiſtrate of Bow-ſtreet, who, not more active in apprehending criminals, than aſſiduous in preventing a perpetual ſucceſſion of them, projected, if I be rightly informed, the inſtitution of the marine ſociety, which is now deſervedly honoured with the ſupport of men of the firſt rank and character in the kingdom.

Now

Now the advantages to the community, ariſing from the ſimplicity of this civil inſtitution, (which, by making void all national eſtabliſhments in religion, would facilitate, and accelerate, the downfall of the Roman arch-anti-chriſt) would be ſuperior to thoſe accrueing from the propoſed plan of parochial epiſcopacy, in a ratio proportioned to the benefits reſulting from that, when compared with the miſeries attendant on the preſent dioceſan hierarchy. The peaceable province of Penſylvania, the moſt flouriſhing of our American colonies, exhibits a ſtanding proof, that the ſpiritual intereſts of men, as members of the chriſtian church, and their temporal welfare, as members of a civil community, are moſt effectually promoted by an entire freedom from the reſtraint of political conſtitutions in religion, of every ſpecies and degree.

This then would be an excellent ſupplement to, and productive of leſs neceſſary expence than, that plan of parochial epiſcopacy, which I have ventured to lay before the public, and the legiſlature. In ſo doing, I am happy in the conſciouſneſs of having

having diſcharged my duty to my God, King, and Country;—to whoſe joint-ſervice I deſign to dedicate (though, in reſpect to my God, I can at beſt be but an unprofitable ſervant) a part of my time and thoughts, throughout life, in the mode moſt ſuitable to that religious profeſſion, in which I have been educated, and which I prefer to any other. Being an inſignificant member of the community, I can do no more than propoſe. It is the province of the legiſlature to conſider, whether it be their duty, or not, to execute this project of the reformation of our conſtitution in church, or any ſimilar ſcheme, which they, in their ſuperior wiſdom, may judge to be more eligible, and practicable.

In the interim, my brethren, thoſe men of apoſtolic ſincerity and intrepidity among the clergy,—who, trampling upon worldly prudence, have preſumed, convinced of the intrinſic goodneſs of their cauſe, in the moſt cogent and expreſſive, though reſpectful and modeſt, terms, to repeatedly, but, alas! ineffectually, ſolicit the late Houſe of Commons, for a releaſe from the burthen of ſubſcription to articles of faith,

and

and to a liturgy, both of human compoſition, are not, in the judgment of men of candor, culpable, if they neither reſign their preſent, nor decline future church-preferment; —provided, at the ſame time, they unremittingly perſevere in applying, from ſeſſion to ſeſſion, till relief be obtained, to this newly elected branch of the legiſlative body, for the removal of a grievance, ſo injurious to the intereſts of chriſtianity, and ſo irkſome to the free-born mind. Perchance, that honourable houſe, reſpectfully addreſſed, may, in their turn, in proceſs of time, be induced, uninfluenced by hierarchical craft, to pay reſpect to a body of their conſtituents, by granting the prayer of their petition, or, at leaſt, admitting it to their table, — an honour, which the deceaſed houſe thought proper to with-hold.

I acknowledge the Houſe of Commons, which is legally repreſentative of the people at large, to be the proper branch of the legiſlature for any claſs of its conſtituents to apply to for a redreſs of grievances,—and am charitably inclined to think, that thoſe of the members, who have been re-elected,

and

and who, in the preceding parliament, ſpake, and voted, againſt the petition, and bill, may be ſeized with a ſpecies of remorſe, in having thus virtually put the word of man on an equality with the word of God.

I truſt too, that a future petition, if it could but paſs through the Commons, would make its way through the Lords, in deſpight of the machinations of the ſpiritual barons to obſtruct it; who, if they ſhould find their oppoſition avail nothing, would, probably, after the true right-reverend faſhion, make a virtue of neceſſity, and give their concurrence, *when not wanted*, with a good grace. It is not to be doubted, that the petition, thus conſtitutionally prepared for the royal aſſent, would receive its final ratification from the cordial 'Le Roi le veut' of a gracious ſovereign.

However, be the event proſperous or adverſe, I frankly declare, I do not accept an increaſe of church-preferment, on the preſent terms of ſubſcription, merely becauſe I cannot obtain it. But, were I in fortune's way, according to the general laical expreſſion, or in the road to prefer-

ment, agreeably to the particular clerical phraſe, I ſhould be unwilling to deſignedly deviate from the track, provided I could *proceed* in it, without offering violence to my own judgment, by ſtooping to the practice of the ſlaviſh attendance, and the mean adulation, ſo often neceſſary to *ſucceed* in it.

Amiable chriſtianity teaches us to bleſs our enemies; alſo, if a man could be juſtified in curſing them, there is an anathema, ſuggeſted by our correct and poliſhed verſifyer, Mr. Pope, which is inferior to none, but that with which the mercileſs compiler of the Athanaſian creed enforces the belief of his incomprehenſible metaphyſical jargon;

'Would you but wiſh to curſe the man
'you hate,
'*Attendance* and *dependence* be his fate.'

I wiſh, it is true, to lay the axe to the root of the tree, and extirpate the preſent eccleſiaſtical part of our conſtitution, root and branch;—have propoſed to plant in its ſtead another church-ſyſtem, of a more evangelic nature, and growth;—and proved it

it to be practicable, not only without detriment, but with manifeſt emolument, to the civil part of our conſtitution, and to my countrymen in general, whether they be conſidered as fellow-citizens, or fellow-chriſtians; — principally becauſe, on the plan of eccleſiaſtical reformation here exhibited to public view, theologians would be deprived of the power of becoming politicians; and, undiſtracted by worldly ambition, be at full liberty to uninterruptedly attend to their religious function, and paſtoral charge, which are alone ſufficient to engroſs the time and thoughts of every worthy, and conſcientious, miniſter of the goſpel.

But, while the bait is thrown out, the fiſhes will bite;—and indeed, while church-matters are ſuffered to remain in their preſent corrupt ſtate, I do not think thoſe, as I before hinted, deſerving of cenſure, who, in an honeſt upright way, acquire a plurality of church-benefices and dignities. Not through want of inclination to enjoy, but through defect of intereſt to procure, ſuch plurality, have I diligently, and unremittingly, ſerved the church, in quality of

parochial miniſter, during the ſpace of fourteen years, and upwards, on very moderate terms, after having previouſly undergone an expenſive academic education.

I do not pretend to oſtentatious mortification, and ſelf-denial. So far am I from wiſhing to be ſo characterized, that, on the contrary, beholding many fortunately ſtep into conſiderable church-preferment, on their very entrance into prieſt's orders, as they are ſtiled, without paſſing through the very inferior rank of a curate, as I have done; I do not intend to heſitate, having long experienced a kind of *ſtarving* in the church, to embrace with joy the offer, *when made*, of a *good living* in a dioceſan biſhopric,—eſpecially, as my conſecration would not be clogged with a ſubſcription to the thirty-nine articles and liturgy,—all church-dignities being, ſtrange as it may appear, exempt from ſuch ſubſcription.

But it is not likely, that ſubſcription will prove, in future, a choke-pear to my conſcience. I have, to the extent of my ability, promoted church-reformation in part, in a former anonimous publication,—which, as a reiterated, though ineffectual, applica-

application has been made to the late Houſe of Commons, has, by the bleſſing of God on my righteous endeavours, anſwered the intended effect of forming an aſſociation, for the purpoſe of petitioning parliament for the removal of ſubſcription: I have too, in this acknowledged pamphlet, laboured to fix our whole eccleſiaſtical conſtitution on a more evangelic baſis than the preſent:—Conſequently, have hitherto, in my own eſtimation, fully diſcharged my own perſonal obligations in this inſtance, as far as my preſent ſtation in life will admit, — and therefore do not propoſe to refuſe ſubſcription for ſuch preferment, as I may deem worthy of my acceptance.

Why ſhould my ſtomach be ſqueamiſh, and nauſeate the ſweeteſt fruits of a corrupt tree, which defies my utmoſt ſtrength and ſkill to eradicate? Happily, my *digeſtive* faculty is ſtronger, than they, who preſumptuouſly ſtile themſelves the orthodox, would wiſh it to be;—they, who, though they prefer indolence to enquiry, and, conſequently, are, many of them, groſsly ignorant of the very elements of the chriſtian religion, yet regard themſelves as the only

capable inſtructors, and ſure guides, of the people; — think, that they alone ſhould ſit in Moſes' ſeat;—and would gladly engroſs church-preferments to themſelves, — and from a participation of them, exclude all, who, 'after the way, which they call he-'reſy, worſhip the God, and Father, of 'our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.'

I propoſe, in future, in conformity to the opinion, and advice, of a ſuppoſed right-reverend author of 'the propriety of requiring ſubſcription,' &c. to regard the ſtrong unequivocal terms, in which ſubſcription is couched, as the unmeaning words of an obſolete ſtatute,—which, notwithſtanding, the legiſlature has not hitherto manifeſted a diſpoſition to repeal;—to conſider the liturgy as the ſtate liturgy in general, and as that of the Houſe of Commons in particular, if that Houſe ſhould, on a future application to it, reject the ſuit of the petitioners;—to publicly pronounce it with propriety, from a principle of due reſpect to the eſtabliſhed public worſhip of the ſtate; — and, in ſhort, to follow the example of thoſe, who arrogantly denominate themſelves my ſuperiors in the church,

church, by henceforth viewing, as they ſeem to do, the clerical profeſſion in the light of a worldly trade, to which I have been educated,—and acquiring as much money by it, as I can, without incurring the guilt of injuſtice and fraud.

The late Houſe of Commons could not but approve of this my future plan of conduct;—for it is to be preſumed, our former repreſentatives in parliament (I ſpeak of them aggregately, not individually) would not have rejected the modeſt petition, and the ſubſequent bill, of the clerical aſſociation, praying for releaſe from that ſubſcription to the thirty-nine articles and liturgy, which their predeceſſors had, conjointly with the other two branches of the legiſlature, in times paſt, impoſed, if they had regarded the church-eſtabliſhment in any other light, than that of a mere ſtate-machine, calculated to ſerve political purpoſes of every kind.

I therefore give this public notice to all, who hear me in the deſk pronounce the eccleſiaſtico-political liturgy, that I repeat the liturgy as ſuch, and not as a form of prayer declarative of my own ſentiments

of the Deity, to whom I ſeriouſly, devoutly, and ſincerely, addreſs prayer, praiſe, and thankſgiving, in private, in the name of my Lord Jeſus Chriſt, or as his diſciple and follower; lamenting, that I am deprived of the power of worſhipping him publicly in the church,—the God of the liturgy and my God being as oppoſite, as darkneſs and light.

Not to inſiſt on the unparalleled farrago of metaphyſical abſurdities and contradictions, contained in the Athanaſian creed, and enforced as articles of faith upon the conſciences of men, by the preſumptuous denunciation of horrid church-anathemas;—it is evident, that in the litany is invoked an 'holy, bleſſed, and glorious trinity, three 'perſons and one God;'—and, when, at the commencement of the general thankſgiving, excellent in its kind, I be naturally led to think, that I addreſs the one *indiviſible* ſupreme Being, under the title of 'Almighty God, Father of all mercies,' I am, to my aſtoniſhment, diſagreeably undeceived in the concluſion, which conſiſts of a doxology, aſcribing '*all* honour 'and glory to Jeſus Chriſt, Almighty God,

and

and the Holy Ghoſt.' Conſequently, Almighty God is here to be conſidered as but one-third part of Deity; and, accordingly, we are expreſsly informed, in the firſt of the two collects for the king, in the communion-ſervice, that 'Jeſus Chriſt, 'with Almighty God, and the Holy Ghoſt, 'liveth and reigneth ever one God, world 'without end.' A moſt curious and matchleſs example of theological nonſenſe and contradiction!

Now this *tri-un* being, this *tripartite* divinity, is, in my eſtimation, *nothing* more or leſs, than a 'nothing in the world,' which is Paul's characteriſtic of 'an idol.' However, an hieroglyphic figure of this non-entity is actually repreſented over the communion-table (often, abſurdly enough, called the altar) in many of our churches. It is almoſt needleſs to obſerve, that the form of it is triangular, ſurrounded with what is called a glory, or a ſplendid circle of rays of light, with the incommunicable name, יהוה, incloſed within it. This altar-piece (for we ſtill are partial to the popiſh terms, altar, and altar-piece) is, in ſome churches, additionally, and ſuperb-

ly,

ly, decorated with the diſplayed wings of trumpeting Seraphim, *angelic men*, formed on the model of the gentile-goddeſs, Fame, and with the mercurial heads of cherubim, plump roſy-cheeked *angelic-boys*, bo peeping out of clouds, and ſuggeſting to the ſpiritual chriſtian the carnal idea of heathen-cupids. But

Ye idolizing orthodox divines!
Who circumſcribe the Deity with lines,
Know, God is one;—nor is th' eternal king,
O vile reſemblance! a *three-corner'd thing*.

O my countrymen! fooled by prieſts, of whom ſome are ſelf-deceived, and others are too much engroſſed by a ſordid attachment to their worldly intereſts, to attempt to undeceive you, this fanciful three-one God, repreſented under the ſimilitude of a triangle confined within a circle, is 'the God, ye worſhip;'—and, I may add, 'ye 'worſhip ye know not what:—I know 'what I worſhip.'

My ſupreme being is ſtrictly, and literally, One. To me 'there is but one God, 'the Father, and one mediator betwixt 'God and man, the man Chriſt Jeſus,' or the

the anointed Saviour,—who acknowledges him to be 'the only true God, and his God and Father.' He is our Saviour, as principal, and Chriſt is our Saviour, as his ſubordinate inſtrumental agent. This God to many of you unknown 'declare I unto you,' with the ſame freedom and boldneſs, with which Paul arraigned the idolatry of the Athenians. The infinitely wiſe, great, and good, being,—the one God and Father of all, independent, and ſelf-exiſtent, immortal, and inviſible,—who has expreſsly declared, that 'he will not give his glory to 'another, nor his worſhip to carved images,' (or painted triangles) I 'worſhip in ſpirit, 'and in truth,'—and, in my prayer before ſermon, 'particularly beſeech him, to de-'feat the anti-chriſtian deſigns of every 'ſpecies of ſpiritual tyranny, perſecution, 'and oppreſſion, to put an end to all ido-'latry, and ſuperſtition, and to proſper the 'labours of all, who preach the goſpel, in 'uncorruptneſs and love.' I am careful alſo to inculcate on the minds of my hearers, this great fundamental truth of all religion, as well natural as revealed, the *literal* unity of the ſupreme being.

While

While I thus maintain my free agency,—and act honeſtly, and without duplicity, in the pulpit, I can reconcile it to my conſcience, to be neceſſarily, and mechanically, acted upon, in the deſk, as a puppet, whoſe tongue is ſet in motion by the biſhops, thoſe unſeen raree-ſhew-men behind the curtain, who pull the wires.—Merely to pleaſe hierarchs, and to furniſh them with an occaſion to raiſe a laugh at my expence, who love the emoluments of the church too well to engage in a reformation of its doctrines and worſhip, I ſhould think myſelf very culpable, to leave the *church-trade*, in which I have been long initiated. — I have hitherto indeed earned but a ſlender pittance by it, but *muſt* continue in it, being badly qualified to undertake other worldly employments;—from which too I underſtand that I am excluded by the law, as it now ſtands, the profeſſion of phyſic, and the education of youth, excepted. The former it is too late in life for me to begin to learn, and for the latter I have the moſt cordial averſion.

Of the preceding arrangement of my deportment in the deſk and pulpit, the reſult

ſult of mature deliberation, I have now made that public declaration, which alone was wanting to render it perfectly ſatisfactory to my own judgment. Of all human beings, my conduct in this inſtance is a point, which concerns myſelf alone. I judge no man; — let no man judge me. 'To our own maſter,' Chriſt, the delegated judge of all, we muſt, in God's due appointed time, reſpectively 'ſtand, or fall.'

Admitting, that it was poſſible, a caſe, ſimilar to that of Naaman, recorded in ſcripture, could happen to me, though I ſhould not think myſelf juſtified in 'bowing down myſelf' to the idol of my heathen-maſter, yet I could, very conſiſtently with my acknowledgment, and worſhip, of the one, only true, God, accompany him to his idol-temple, in virtue of the office he might honour me with, as captain of his hoſt, provided I previouſly and unequivocally acknowledged, in as public a manner as poſſible, to my king and his people, that I went thither, merely as an attendant upon his perſon, and not as a worſhipper of his idol.

In

In like manner, if it had been my lot to have exiſted at Epheſus in the days of Paul, been led by his preaching to embrace chriſtianity, and, at the ſame time, had worked at the trade of a ſilver-ſmith, I probably ſhould have thought it unreaſonable, and, conſequently, not obligatory on my conſcience, to have dropped the moſt lucrative branch of my trade, 'the making of ſilver ſhrines for Diana,' without a ſpecial commiſſion from God ſo to do. I think, in this caſe, I ſhould have plainly, and ſincerely, declared to my heathen-neighbours;

'Good folks! I am perſuaded, ye are 'all in the wrong, in reſpect to your re-'ligious practices, and cordially diſap-'prove. and totally renounce, your eſta-'bliſhed idolatrous polytheiſm. Ye will 'do well to liſten to the preaching of this 'Paul, who exhorts you, in virtue of a 'divine commiſſion, of which he is ready 'to give you inconteſtible evidence by the 'actual diſplay of indubitable miracles, to "turn from theſe vanities, and ſerve the "one living, and true, God."—'For my 'own part, I propoſe to direct my future 'addreſſes of prayer and praiſe to him 'alone,

'alone, the infinitely wiſe, great, and good,
'Father of the univerſe; being convinced
'of the extreme ſinfulneſs of idol-worſhip.'

'If ye too be ſo convinced, ye will have
'no farther occaſion for employing me, or
'any brother of the trade, in what at pre-
'ſent conſtitutes, as ye very well know,
'the main, and the moſt advantageous, ar-
'ticle in the buſineſs of a ſilver-ſmith.
'But, if ye be not ſo convinced, and per-
'ſiſt in an opinion, (which, I frankly aſ-
'ſure you, is, in my idea, repugnant to
'truth and common ſenſe) that "thoſe are
"God's, which are made with hands," —
'and, conſequently, be determined to wor-
'ſhip ſilver ſtatues of your great goddeſs, as
'ye call her;—I will even make them for
'you, to the beſt of my workmanſhip, as
'heretofore;—for I do not approve of fur-
'niſhing thoſe of the ſame craft with
'opportunity to outſtrip me in the exerciſe
'of the moſt profitable branch of the
'worldly calling, to which I have been
'trained from a child.'

Notwithſtanding theſe ſuppoſed inſtances be ſufficient to convey my meaning, yet I will

I will ſtrengthen them with the addition of another.

It is true indeed, though 'an idol be no-'thing in the world, and all meats be cre-'ated to be received with thankſgiving by 'them, who believe, and know, the truth;' yet I ſhould have been criminal in 'eating of thoſe things, which were of-'fered in ſacrifice to idols' in the preſence of a weak brother, — who, knowing them to be ſuch, and not perfectly underſtanding the extent of chriſtian liberty in this inſtance, might imagine, that, by eating them, I acknowledged the lawfulneſs of idol-worſhip and communion. — Therefore it would have been incumbent on me to abſtain from them, for the ſake of his conſcience; which would have been offended, at leaſt, by my eating them, if the worſe conſequence had not enſued of encouraging him, by my example, to partake of them himſelf, in direct violation of his conſcience.

But, admitting it to be poſſible that I muſt have died with hunger if I had not partaken of the fleſh of theſe heathen-ſacrifices; — I ſhould, in my own judgment, which ought to be the ſole rule of my own conduct,

conduct, have purſued the line of duty to its utmoſt ſtretch, if I had endeavoured, to the extent of my ability, and by all the rational arguments of benevolent perſuaſion, to rectify the error in judgment of my chriſtian brother. But, in literally famiſhing myſelf, rather than partake of meats offered to idols, when I could conſcientiouſly have eaten them, I ſhould have incurred the guilt of ſuicide, out of complaiſance to his weakneſs; which, as a ſin, and that of the deepeſt dye, it would have been incumbent on me to avoid: for it matters not, whether a man ſtarve, hang, or drown, himſelf; — in all the three caſes, he is equally guilty of ſuicide.

Now this argument applies, with equal force and energy, to the affair of ſubſcripton. There is but one *bleſt* alternative, namely, ſubſcribe, or ſtarve. I prefer ſubſcription to famine; becauſe I have exerted, and ſtill continue to exert, my beſt endeavours, in a peaceable, upright, legal, way, to remove ſubſcription; — and becauſe I now, from the preſs, frankly and ſincerely announce to the public the expedient, by which I perſiſt in the public peruſal of the

eſtabliſhed liturgy, free from the ſecret upbraidings of my own mind, regarding it, to repeat what I before advanced, as a politico-eccleſiaſtical form of words, or ſtock in trade, in which religion itſelf is not at all concerned, and ſubſcription to that, and to the articles, as the mere inſignificant ceremony of under-writing my name to a noleſs inſignificant and old obſolete law-ſtatute, meant to be regarded two centuries agone, when it was firſt enacted, but equally deſigned to be diſregarded now, though not formally repealed;—it being cuſtomary to releaſe from the ſeverity of an act of parliament, when either its uſefulneſs ceaſes, or it is diſcovered to be more uſeleſs than uſeful. In both of theſe caſes, it is to be underſtood as tacitly, and virtually, before it be expreſsly, and *ipſo facto*, repealed.

This, I think, may be aſſerted without the hazard of affronting the three eſtates of the realm, or the gentlemen of the law. I can truly affirm, I mean no offence to the one, or the other. On the contrary, to the former I chearfully render their accuſtomed dues, honour, reſpect, and conſtitu-

ſtitutional obedience, as my legiſlators and governors; — and the latter are peculiarly intitled to every teſtimony of my regard and eſteem as a body of men, not merely becauſe I never experienced a ſingle inſtance of chicanery from any one of them, but on account of the acts of friendſhip in the way of their profeſſion, which I have received from more than one of this claſs of my countrymen, and from one in particular.

As to the plea of thoſe, who, with myſelf, diſapprove of the church-ſervice, and yet argue for the propriety of their continuance to officiate in the deſk from the conſideration, that, by their pulpit-inſtructions, they may become ſerviceable to the chriſtian cauſe, though it may prove ſatisfactory to their conſciences, yet it is inadmiſſible to mine, — as ſuch a plea, in my judgment, implies the inexcuſable preſumption, that God ſtands in need of my inſtrumentality in the corrupt church of England, in order to promote the welfare of his uncorrupt church of Chriſt;—whereas God is all-ſufficient to take care of his own church, without my feeble aid.

I therefore cannot perſiſt in the public peruſal of the liturgy, on any other ground, than that of a ſtate-liturgy; — as, in fact, it is become peculiarly ſuch, ſince the rejection of the clerical petition, and bill, by the late houſe of Commons. In ſhort, when I recite it in the deſk, I conſider religion as entirely out of the queſtion, and myſelf as exerciſing a ſtate-trade, for which I was, from my youth, ſet apart by my only-ſurviving parent, a tender well-meaning mother, who judged for me, to the beſt of her judgment, at a time of life, when I was either incapable of judging, or too thoughtleſs to judge, for myſelf. As in other public offices, I plod on in the common beaten track of buſineſs, — and, as in them, ſo alſo in the *church-office* of the *ſtate*, my advancement depends on my worldly intereſts and connexions, which are neither extenſive, nor conſiderable. However, I am happy in the preſent opportunity of publicly acknowledging my obligations to a valuable relation, for his indefatigable aſſiduity in procuring me that church preferment, which I now enjoy, —and am ready to accept as much more,

as

as any friend is able to confer upon me, ſo long, as government approves of continuing the eſtabliſhment of my politico-eccleſiaſtical trade.

But my judgment and conſcience herein are not to be the ſtandard of thoſe of my clerical brethren, who are not convinced of the rectitude thereof. On the other hand, my two worthy friends, who have, I verily believe, from a principle truly conſcientious, reſigned the preferment which they reſpectively held in the eſtabliſhed church, the one in that of England, and the other in that of Ireland, are, in my opinion, too well inſtructed in the ſpirit of chriſtianity, to preſume to judge my liberty by their conſciences; — and not to know, that 'happy is he, who condemn-'eth not himſelf in that which he allow-'eth.'—Since I wrote the above, a third inſtance of ſimilar reſignation of church-preferment has reached mine ears. However, while I continue in my preſent ſentiments of regarding the politically eſtabliſhed church in the light of a worldly trade, (and *poſitively* it is, *comparatively* with other trades, *ſuperlatively* ſo) the cacoethes of reſignation, though it have ſeized the

minds of men, for whom I cheriſh a ſincere eſteem, as men of good moral principles, will not affect my conſcience, till ſuch time as I can, on ſelf-ſatisfactory grounds, change my ſentiments on this point.

But, as paſt reſignations may be followed by future of the like kind, I beg leave to ſuggeſt a quære, whether they might not be rendered doubly meritorious, if they could be made to take place in favour of thoſe of the clerical petitioners, who, ſelf-ſatisfied, that they have taken true pains, by the conſtitutional mode of application, repeatedly, though unſucceſsfully, made to the late houſe of Commons, to obtain a legal redreſs of the grievance of ſubſcription, as it now ſtands, can, like myſelf, conſcientiouſly ſubſcribe again, and, conſequently, accept the vacated preferment. For all future propoſals of church-reformation will iſſue with a much better grace from thoſe of the petitioning brethren, who continue in the church, than from thoſe who have deſerted it;—and every acceſſion of church-preferment to the former will, in theſe worldly times, which are

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remarkable for giving influence to wealth, be accompanied with an addition of weight and energy to their propoſals.

But, in truth, the continued renewal of the addreſs of the petitioners to the new Houſe of Commons pre-ſuppoſed, the whole buſineſs of ſubſcription now evidently reſts with that branch of the legiſlature, as do alſo the aforeſaid, or any ſimilar, propoſals of a complete church-reformation, which they alone, in conjunction with the lords and king, can execute.

The two poles of this terraqueous globe are not more diſtant from each other, than I am remote from the proſpect of attaining a dioceſan biſhopric, that 'good thing,' which many a dutiful, and undutiful, ſon of mother-church, 'deſireth,' eſpecially, as 'the office' annext to it is a mere ſinecure, when compared with that of an apoſtolic biſhop. But if, indeed, by a train of unforeſeen improbable events, I ſhould ever be elevated to the hierarchical dignity, it is my fixt, and, I hope, will prove my invariable, intention, convinced as I am, that all civil eſtabliſhments in religion, are anti-chriſtian, to make an annual motion

in the houſe of Lords, ſo long as it ſhall be neceſſary, in favour of the preceding wiſe political inſtitution, to be ſubſtituted in lieu of every eccleſiaſtical conſtitution ;—and, if that cannot be obtained, as conſtantly to endeavour, in virtue of my privilege, as a Lord ſpiritual, to procure, at leaſt, a ſalutary reformation of our conſtitution in church, conformable to the great outlines, delineated in the foregoing plan, of erecting parochial on the ruins of dioceſan epiſcopacy ;—of the emoluments whereof, or of thoſe of the ſubordinate church-dignities, and of benefices, whether cures, or ſine-cures, I can conſcientiouſly partake, in any given and legally-tenable quantity, while others are allowed ſo to do.

I do not abſolutely pre-engage to behave in this upright parliamentary manner, becauſe there are inſtances among my clerical brethren of men, who, after their conſecration to a biſhopric, have turned their backs upon chriſtian liberty, whoſe cauſe they before eſpouſed, fulfilling the true old adage, 'honours change men's 'manners.' I therefore chooſe to diſtruſt myſelf, hoping thereby, with the divine aſſiſ-

aſſiſtance, the more ſecurely to guard againſt the corruption of my chriſtian integrity, and the more effectually to perform my righteous intentions, on the very trying occaſion of an exaltation to a dioceſan biſhopric; — which, though it be highly improbable at preſent that the hierarchical dignity ſhould ever fall to my lot, yet the ſurprizing viciſſitudes in human affairs convince me, is not altogether literally impoſſible.—Happy ſhall I be, if either the execution of the aforeſaid plan of parochial epiſcopacy, or the eſtabliſhment of the wiſe political inſtitution, recommended in lieu of it, which are reſpectfully ſubmitted to the wiſdom of the public, and of the legiſlature, for their joint conſideration, correction, and improvement, ſhould render my elevation to the mitre a point abſolutely unneceſſary.

In the mean time, deſtitute as I am of worldly influence, and circumſcribed as I muſt neceſſarily be in my ability by my preſent very moderate church circumſtances, I reſt ſatisfied with having exerted my moſt ſtrenuous endeavours, in this pamphlet, to effect a complete reformation of

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our conſtitution in church;—adding thereto this frank confeſſion, that the friends to religious liberty in the eſtabliſhed church, whether they be clergymen, or laymen, may expect to find me ready to aſſociate with them, in petitioning the houſe of Commons for that excellent purpoſe, on my own comprehenſive levelling plan, or on an improvement of it by others.

I know not a ſingle particular more wanting on my part, as a private clerical individual, to accompliſh ſo deſirable an object. Happy in this conſolatory reflexion, I make a ſolemn and public declaration to every claſs of men, throughout England and Wales,—that, if a bold publication of my ſentiments on the neceſſity, expediency, utility, and practicability, of this levelling ſcheme of church-reformation,—if free, but juſt, animadverſions on a part of the late addreſs of the convocation to his majeſty,—if a farcical deſcription of an epiſcopo-military triumvirate arming for the american warfare,—ſhould unfortunately involve me in diſagreable worldly conſequences, I hope, through the divine aſſiſtance, which, on my ſincere and humble

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ſupplication for it, qualifies me to write, ſpeak, and act, in the cauſe of genuine chriſtianity, to ſuſtain them with calmneſs, compoſure, and patience. I hope too, guarding againſt the raſh confidence of Peter in his own ſtrength, to be enabled, by repoſing a ſtedfaſt truſt in 'my heavenly Father, the God of all comfort in tribulation,' and by keeping in view his gracious promiſe of an happy immortality, to ſuffer, with an undaunted chriſtian fortitude, any difficulties and diſtreſſes, I may undergo, (I repeat a former expreſſion) 'even unto priſon, and unto death,' in conſequence of this lawful and neceſſary, but arduous and hazardous, enterprize, — the propoſal of a plan to amend our conſtitution in church. Without this, or a like effectual amendment, I apprehend, it is in vain to expect, that chriſtianity ſhould ever recover its unadulterated truth and ſimplicity, in reſpect of doctrine, in the minds, or its primitive purity and probity, in reſpect of morals, which are of infinite importance in the actions of men.

My neareſt, and deareſt, relatives, and friends, tenderly ſolicitous for my temporal

ral welfare, if they had been apprized of my deſign, would, probably, have counſeled me, not to affix my name to this publication ;—but, to adopt a Boſtonian phraſe, '*I feel myſelf bold*' in the purſuit of this glorious cauſe of chriſtian truth and virtue, in which I have voluntarily engaged. To be aſhamed of an undertaking, which I regard as my trueſt glory, or moſt to be afraid, when I have reaſon to be moſt courageous, would betray a ſhameful want of chriſtian fortitude and magnanimity.

Moreover, independently of that well-directed active zeal for the public welfare, in that moſt eſſential point, religion, which ought to animate me, I own, though the tacit approbation of my own conſcience outweigh popular applauſe, that I would not be thought altogether inſenſible of that portion of public fame, which may be beſtowed on me by thoſe worthy and ſerious chriſtians, who perceive, and lament, with myſelf, the increaſing tendency injurious to the revival of evangelic principles and practice, in their native uncorruptneſs, which follows from the continuance of dioceſan epiſcopacy, inexcuſably

bly obtruded upon that religion, which acknowledges no Lord, and head, appointed by God in religious concerns, but Chriſt.

He, as he chearfully 'rendered to Cæſar 'the things which were Cæſar's, and encroached not upon the kingdoms of the world, ought, ſurely, to reign ſole king in his own ſpiritual kingdom, given him by God.—But hierarchs and Lords ſpiritual, thoſe 'lords over God's heritage', ſtiled the governors of the church, in whoſe perſons are unnaturally incorporated religion and politics, are hoſtile invaders of the kingdom of Chriſt, 'loving' and exerciſing, 'a pre-eminence in his church,' and 'dominion over the faith' of its members; — and, moreover, uſurp the power of the civil magiſtrate in part, in the inſtance of claiming, and bearing, a ſhare in the legiſlation, and judicature, of this kingdom.

Laſtly, let thoſe ſhun the light, whoſe deeds cannot face it;—let thoſe ſink under the deceitful quick-ſands of falſhood, who chooſe to truſt to her. I love neither darkneſs, nor falſhood. Hypocriſy and diſſimulation I ſcorn. — Plain-dealing and ſincerity I prize; — and am unwilling to diſ-

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grace my worthy ancestry of the fourteenth century, who selected *Veritas Petra nostra* for their family-device. — True to this, standing immoveable upon that firm basis, the rock of truth, and relying on God, my best friend, 'though an host of foes were against me, yet shall not my heart be afraid.'—Like my name-sake the apostle Peter, (for Peter and Stone are terms synonimous) I love my master, Christ, and, '*in all humility*,' hope to be ever true to truth, 'the truth, as it is in Jesus,' — and, consequently, to act my part on the stage of this life, in a manner not unworthy of the sur-name of Stone.

I mean, likewise, to pay a practical regard to the purport of my baptismal name, Francis, which implies Free, by asserting boldly, in this avowed most public manner, the right of every christian individual to the full enjoyment, and unrestrained exercise, of that species of civil or social liberty, which is usually stiled religious, the Romanists excepted, who must be restricted in the indulgence of their idolatrous worship, for obvious and substantial political reasons.

If

If indeed the ſuperſtition of modern papal Rome conſiſted merely of the will-worſhip of ſaints-mediators grafted on the fanciful polytheiſm of antient pagan Rome, — and of other idolatrous trumpery, it would be cognizable and puniſhable by a divine tribunal alone. But, as it profeſſedly ſtrikes at the annihilation of the exiſtence of our civil conſtitution, by ſubjecting our king, and his kingdom, with their liberties, properties, and conſciences, to the arbitrary diſpoſal of their temporal and ſpiritual head, the biſhop of Rome perſonally, or his church collectively, it is evident, that the Romaniſts maintain, under the deceitful guiſe of a religious tenet, a moſt deſtructive political maxim, and, conſequently, muſt be reſtrained from annoying, and deſtroying, us, whoſe anceſtry bled under their murthering hands, by a dread of the enforcement of thoſe penal ſtatutes, which were framed, by the watchful wiſdom of our legiſlature, for that ſalutary and neceſſary purpoſe. I hope therefore the continuance of theſe ſtatutes will be coeval with the duration of their formidable eccleſiaſtical ſyſtem of ſpiritual and civil tyranny; — eſpecially, as a confi-

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dence may be placed in the humanity of the Britiſh legiſlature and public, that they will ever be executed, in every neceſſary caſe, in as mild a manner, as ſhall be conſiſtent with the grand object in view,—namely, national ſecurity from the nefarious and blood-thirſty attempts of the papiſts. The penal laws enacted againſt them reſemble the guardian-dogs in the fable;—if they be ſuſpended, the wolf is let looſe into the fold, and ſet on to devour the ſheep. As, by God's bleſſing, the nation has been repeatedly delivered from the cruel common enemy, let us not preſume upon the divine mercy, by becoming careleſs, and raſhly confident of ſelf-preſervation againſt his inſidious attacks. He acts by ſtratagem, through the dangerous inſtrumentality of the ſubtle order of Jeſuits, that pillar of the papal ſupremacy, till a favourable opportunity offers for an open aſſault with the ſword. The ſanguinary ſpirit of popery is not dead, but ſleepeth; — and an unwiſe relaxation of neceſſary legal ſeverity would awaken it, in all its infernal terrors, and inſatiate fury,—and excite it to a renewal of tragic ſcenes, ſimilar

milar to the Bartholomew-maſſacre of Paris,—the Sicilian veſpers, the Iriſh maſſacre, and our own Smithfield conflagrations, all perpetrated by the arch-anti-chriſtian power of the church of Rome. Perſecution is its fundamental and invariable principle. A church therefore, thus conſtituted, whoſe known principle is intolerance, cannot, in the nature of things, be intitled to toleration, which proteſtant diſſenters of every denomination, who diſavow perſecution, will deſerve to enjoy in an unlimited degree, zealouſly attached as they are, and not leſs ſo than the members of the eſtabliſhed church, to the proteſtant ſucceſſion of the houſe of Hanover to the imperial throne of Great-Britain.

I have been thus particular in my remarks on the intolerant ſpirit of popery, in order to counteract the bad conſequences of an alarming poſition, contained in the charge of a certain dioceſan at his laſt viſitation, which was expreſſed in words to this effect,—*that ſome relaxation of the penal laws againſt the papiſts, as it was perfectly conſonant to the ſpirit of our religion, a religion built upon love, was alſo adviſable, becauſe they had greatly*

relaxed from their anti-chriſtian ſpirit of intolerance.—This, however, is a *petitio principii* which cannot be granted;—for the inability of the Romaniſts to exert that ſpirit, reſtrained as it is by the penal ſtatutes, cannot be adduced in proof, that the ſpirit itſelf does not ſecretly exiſt. We may as well argue, that a curſt cur, who was notorious for biting, before he was muzzled, will not renew his inveterate miſchievous tricks, if the muzzle be removed. A Latin poet ſays of Nature;

'*Naturam expellas furcâ licet, uſque re-*
'*curret.*'

Now popery ſtands in the ſame predicament with nature; for perſecution is interwoven with its very nature. But the aforeſaid dangerous inſinuation, which publicly iſſued from the lips of a proteſtant biſhop, was, I apprehend, from my knowledge of epiſcopal craft, calculated to apologize to his clergy, for his parliamentary ſuffrage in favour of the pernicious Quebec-act, which militates againſt proteſtantiſm. His political miſconduct, and that of the mitred fraternity in general, in this inſtance, is with me an additional cogent argument for the

the ſubverſion of the hierarchy, and for the conſequent expulſion of ſpiritual lords from the houſe of peers.

I have now produced the weighty arguments of conſiſtent proteſtants, for the exception of the Romaniſts from the unreſtrained exerciſe of what they may ſtile religious liberty, but what proteſtants cannot but term an impolitic licenſe to ſubvert the civil conſtitution of thoſe whom they are pleaſed to denominate heretics, and to compel them to embrace their ſuperſtition.

I have alſo aſſigned the ſeveral motives which induced me, unimportant homuncio as I am, to appear under my real name and character in this treatiſe;—which is uſhered into the world, 'with all its imperfec-'tions on its head,' and without the communication of its contents to a ſingle human creature, previouſly to its publication. Hence the glory and the ſhame, 'the good 'and the evil report,' conſequent upon it, (a church-reformer muſt expect to experience a ſhare of both) neceſſarily redound to myſelf alone.

Perhaps the dictates of worldly prudence, if attended to, might have counſeled me

to ſhelter myſelf under the mean ſubterfuge of anonymous, or pſeudonymous, publication. But, in truth, on caſting a retroſpective eye over the whole of my plan of a conſtitution in church, which would prove injurious to none, but beneficial to all men, I cannot diſcern the neceſſity of the ſelfiſh admonitions of that very ſage and diſcreet lady;—*lady!* I repeat; mankind, equally complaiſant and rude to the fair ſex, however they diſſent on other points, being agreed in this one particular, viz. that moſt virtues, and vices, temperance, and the very maſculine accompliſhment, fortitude, excepted, are to be perſonified under the feminine gender.

It muſt indeed be confeſſed, that the lords ſpiritual have been treated rather cavalierly:— but, on the other hand, it ſhould be conſidered, that raillery is the only weapon which can make any Impreſſion on the callous conſciences of hierarchs, who have afforded abundant teſtimony, that they are inſenſible, and inimical, to every application, in favour of church-reformation. It ought likewiſe to be remembered, that ample amends have been made for the plea-

pleaſantry indulged at their expence in that part of my plan, wherein I adviſe the meaſure of penſioning the preſent bench of dioceſan biſhops for life, to the full amount of their reſpective ſuppreſſed church-revenues. They, when deprived of their ſenatorial honours, and delivered from the temptation of worldly ambition, to which they are, by the very nature of the preſent church-conſtitution, unavoidably and *cruelly* expoſed, may gradually recover that priſtine tenderneſs of conſcience, which they enjoyed, before it was hardened by the pride of life, and hackneyed in the ways of the world. I verily believe, there is not a man of the whole fraternity of ſpiritual lords, who would not prove an ornament to the chriſtian religion, and a worthy diſciple of his maſter Chriſt, if he were but reduced, in conſequence of the execution of the propoſed, or a ſimilar, new arrangement of our eccleſiaſtical eſtabliſhment, from a public, to a private, ſtation. In that caſe, as I ſhould have no farther occaſion for the uſe of the epiſcopo-maſtix, ſo alſo, in all human probability, the virtues of the lords biſhops, which are now ob-

ſcured by the black miſt of temporal ſelf-intereſt, would ſhine forth with a blaze of glory, reſembling the ſplendid light of the ſun, when it breaks forth from the dark cover of an envious cloud. Then would I, who now, with too much reaſon, but with reluctance and regret, cenſure their conduct, with joy, and an hearty good-will, reſume the pen in their praiſe.

The reſt of the dignified clergy, and all others, whoſe benefices are ſine-cures, will have no reaſon to complain of me, as they likewiſe, in conſequence of my church-reforming ſcheme, would receive penſions for life, to the extent of their former eccleſiaſtical incomes.

Thoſe rectors too, and vicars,—in ſhort all, whoſe benefices, attended with the cure of ſouls, exceed in value two hundred pounds per annum each,—and who are to be continued, each of them, in one ſuch benefice, diſtinguiſhed in future by the new denomination of a parochial biſhopric, cannot be diſſatisfied, as they would be in the ſame manner provided for, *durante vitâ*, it being propoſed to reduce their parochial biſhoprics to the ſtandard-ſalary of two hundred

dred pounds per annum each, at their reſpective deaths, and not before.

From the clergymen of this claſs, whoſe benefices do not amount to the ſum of two hundred pounds per annum each, I ſhall be intitled to thanks and praiſe, as they, on aſſuming the new denomination of parochial biſhops or paſtors, would each enjoy the ſaid ſalary of two hundred pounds per annum.

But the largeſt portion of grateful acknowledgment would be due to me from the hired curates, who, in conſequence of the execution of my church-reforming ſcheme, would exchange the precarious tenure of a curacy for the certain poſſeſſion of an annuity of one hundred pounds per annum each, for their immediate ſupport, till ſuch time, as they ſhall gradually ſucceed to parochial biſhoprics of two hundred pounds per annum each;—which ſucceſſion will be the ſooner completed, as all pluralities will be ſuppreſt.

The two univerſities will, no doubt, honour me with ſome diſtinguiſhing mark of their approbation, as this new arrangement of the eccleſiaſtical conſtitution is ſingular-

ly beneficial to them, in the final event. For, when the preſent race of curates ſhall be extinct in their univerſal ſucceſſion to parochial biſhoprics, it has been propoſed, that the future continued ſupply of parochial paſtors ſhall be excluſively taken from thoſe ſeminaries of learning, and regulated by the alternate academical ſeniority of their reſpective members, accompanied with thoſe ſeveral preparatory qualifications to an admiſſion to the paſtoral function, which have been before repeatedly repreſſed.

The houſe of commons, and the lords temporal, I truſt, will not be diſpleaſed with my propoſal for the deſtruction of the hierarchy, as they would be thereby enabled, in common with the ſubordinate claſſes of the community, to become purchaſers of the lands and houſes of the church.

The temporal lords, in particular, will probably be well-ſatisfied, that, by the expulſion of lords ſpiritual from their houſe, all reſtraint on the freedom of debate for the intereſts of the nation, cauſed by them, will neceſſarily ceaſe. By the ſuppreſſion of the hierarchical, and ſubordinate eccleſiaſtical,

ſiaſtical, dignities, the lords temporal indeed will be deprived of one method of procuring an ample proviſion for the younger branches of their families. Be it ſo. Still promotion in the army, and in the navy, will be open to them, as heretofore;—and, though, according to the new arrangement of parochial epiſcopacy, they would only enjoy the common benefit of paſtoral ſucceſſion ariſing from academical ſeniority, and all proſpect of lucrative preferment in the church would ceaſe, yet this loſs might be fully compenſated to them by the gain of commerce;—which, in this caſe, would poſſeſs the excellent property of giving to the community, from among the relatives of the nobility, induſtrious and ſerviceable civil bees, in exchange for lazy and uſeleſs eccleſiaſtical drones.

The merchants of Tyre were, and of Venice are, the nobles of the land;—and, why the converſe of the propoſition ſhould not in future be realized, in our own country,—and the nobles of England, or rather their relatives, commence the merchants of the land, no ſubſtantial reaſon can be aſſigned. In general, our young men

men of quality ſeem to have hitherto conſidered mercantile connections as a degradation, diſgraceful to their patrician blood, and adapted merely to the plebeian character. But an honourable alderman of the city of London has wiſely renounced this eſtabliſhed falſe delicacy, which ſavours ſtrongly of a ridiculous hauteur;—and his example, in this inſtance at leaſt, is truly worthy of their imitation. The opportunities, which, it is natural to ſuppoſe, occur to the eldeſt ſons of peers, in their peregrinations, of forming a valuable foreign correſpondence, may facilitate the commercial eſtabliſhment of their younger brothers. Having then recommended to our nobility mercantile induſtry, as a deſireable ſuccedaneum to eccleſiaſtical indolence, in the point of ſettling a proviſion for the junior branches of their families,—and its equivalent, in point of profit, I flatter myſelf, my church-reforming ſcheme will not be deemed totally undeſerving of their approbation and encouragement.

With reſpect to my ſovereign, it cannot be doubted, that his acknowledged pious diſpoſition will prompt him, to embrace with

with joy the opportunity of becoming the firſt chriſtian King, who ſhould promote the ſpiritual intereſts of his ſubjects, as chriſtians, and their civil welfare, as Britons, by *thruſting the world out of the church*; thus exhibiting in his conduct the amiable reverſe of that of Conſtantine. He, as the author of 'the dignity of human nature', juſtly obſerves, was the firſt chriſtian emperor, who 'thruſt the world into 'the church,'—and thereby gave chriſtianity and his country that deep wound, which was then painfully felt, and has not been healed, from that day to the preſent hour;—but feſtering ſpread, like a gangrene, till it reached the vitals of every body politic throughout the chriſtian world.

In the next place, as by my ſovereign, whoſe loving, loyal, and conſtitutional, ſubject I am, the lords temporal, and the commons, ſo alſo by adminiſtration, my plan of parochial epiſcopacy may poſſibly be thankfully accepted, and, with ſuitable legiſlative improvements, adopted. The execution of it indeed would be accompanied with a loſs to adminiſtration of their faſt friends, the lords ſpiritual. But, as

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the will, not the turpitude, or rectitude, of the meaſures, of every adminiſtration is the invariable ſtandard, by which they collectively regulate their ſuffrages in the houſe of peers, this would be equally the lot of future miniſters;—while the preſent would excluſively enjoy the unſpeakable ſatisfaction, of inſuring to themſelves a laſting popularity, in conſequence of purſuing the ſalutary meaſure recommended, of applying the produce of ſuppreſſed church-poſſeſſions to that deſireable object, the reduction of the heavy load of public debt;—a meaſure! which would effectually reſtore public credit, and exhibit an inconteſtable proof of their true and attentive regard to national welfare. Let ſelfiſh ſcribblers of politics proſtitute their venal pens, to the infamous purpoſe of indiſcriminate fulſom panegyric on all the proceedings of adminiſtration. I chooſe rather to indulge the ſublime heart-felt pleaſure of a diſintereſted philanthropiſt, endeavouring to make himſelf ſerviceable to them, by ſuggeſting to their obſervation this effectual method to erect a durable monument to their own fame.

Laſtly;

Laſtly; I am happy in the conſciouſneſs, *me optimè meritum eſſe de Republicâ*:—for, not to repeat the general tendency of my new-modelled conſtitution in church, to promote public utility, as well in civil, as in religious concerns, it cannot ſurely eſcape the notice of the moſt ſuperficial thinker, that the ſingle and ſimple propoſal, of appropriating the produce of the ſale of church-lands and great tithes, (which now, at a time, when the value of land every where increaſes, muſt be very great) the fund ariſing from the firſt-fruits and tenths, and every ſpecies of church-poſſeſſion and revenue, (ſmall tithes excepted, which are only propoſed to be ſuppreſſed, ſee page 160) to the ſole purpoſe of diſcharging, or, at leaſt, diminiſhing, the debt of the nation, now accumulated to the enormous ſum of one hundred and forty millions, more or leſs, is, in itſelf alone, an eſſential ſervice rendered to the community. This may be ſufficient, I modeſtly preſume, to intitle me to the hope of being regarded, and rewarded, by the court and the city, by my own country and her colonies, as a patriotic projector of the firſt magnitude, of

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whoſe enterprize the national importance and utility are incomparably great, and equal to the novelty.

I am indeed aware, cenſure may point an arrow at me, for indulging the *vis comica* with a too frequent intruſion of its laughable impertinencies into a ſubject of the moſt intereſting and ſerious tendency. My apology is, in the words of Horace,

——————————— 'Ridiculum acri
'Fortiùs ac meliùs magnas plerumque ſecat res.'

Beſides, I write for the peruſal of men of every age, taſte, genius, and opinion,—and, conſequently, of the young and the old,—the gay and the grave,—the mercurial and the ſaturnine,—the orthodox and the heterodox;—and am not intirely without hopes, that the ſportſman will ſteal an hour from the turf,—and the narciſſus of the age, that *thing* of the epicene gender, the macaroni, the ſame portion of time from the toilet, to give my hobby-horſical plan of church-reformation one fair reading. The former, if he ſhould caſually hear of orthodoxy's pedigree ſet forth in this pamphlet, will naturally read on, till he meets with it. But, it muſt be confeſſed, it contains

tains not any thing to ſuit the taſte of the latter,—not a word of pins, powder, patches, and paint;—which, I agree with him, are four articles of greater importance, than ſome of the thirty-nine articles of the faith of the church of England.

I may juſtify my feeble attempts at raillery, in the particular inſtance of ridiculeing the Athanaſian trinity in unity, and the painted alluſions to it in our churches, not yet ſuffered to be white-waſhed away, by the example of the prophet Elijah,—who, when the worſhippers of Baal, who, it ſeems, was rather hard of hearing, had invoked their idol, without effect, 'from morn, even until noon,' mocks them, and ſets at nought their god, in a moſt exquiſite ſtrain of irony,—'Cry with a great voice,—for 'he is a God;—either he meditateth, or 'he hath a purſuit,—or he is in a journey, '—or, peradventure, he ſleepeth, and muſt 'be awaked.'

Another objection, if not more, may be urged againſt the ſtyle of this pamphlet,—namely, that it abounds with ſelf-ſufficient egotiſms. In truth, it muſt be confeſſed, that the diſguſtful primitive, and poſſeſ-

ſive,

ſive, pronoun, *I* and *my*, very frequently occur:—an offence! the more inexcuſeable, as it is almoſt as eaſy to write in humble imperſonals, or third perſonals, as in arrogant firſt perſonals. But, admitting, that the author's natural ſympathy with the egotiſm, and antipathy to the neutrotiſm, and the illetiſm, were invincible, he might ſtill have uncenſurably exerciſed his partial predilection for the firſt perſon, by adopting the plural noſtrotiſm. No! to the uſe of the noſtrotiſm, *we*, *us*, and *our*, he is particularly averſe; — as the noſtrotiſm ought, in his eſtimation, to be ſolely appropriated to the *regal* ſtyle, and he is too ſtedfaſtly attached to the duty, he owes to his king, to preſume to invade his lawful prerogative. In ſhort, the whole truth is, he has clothed his ſentiments throughout in a garb of expreſſion, taken from the wardrobe of nature, without paying the leaſt attention to the *pronominal article* of ſtyle. On a review of his little treatiſe, he was ſenſibly ſtruck with the multitude of egotiſms. However, he intends, not without permiſſion, to ſin in like manner for the future, to atone for his paſt offences

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in this reſpect by an ingenuous acknowledgment of his guilt; at the ſame time, 'in *all humility*,' declaring, that *we hope, he hopes, and it is hoped*, that a candid and generous public will ſign his pardon.

To reſume therefore the ſelfiſh egotiſm once more, I now, in the trite pulpit-'phraſe, draw towards a concluſion,' exhorting my countrymen to join me in prayer to God for the national welfare of our Sion,—'pray for the peace of Jeruſalem;—'they ſhall proſper, who love thee:—Peace 'be within thy walls,—Proſperity within 'thy palaces,'—and the comforts of a competency of the neceſſaries, and conveniencies, of life within all thy dwellings, whereſoever diſperſed throughout the four quarters of this habitable globe!—'For my 'brethren and companions ſakes, I will 'now ſay,' "Peace be within thee!" 'Becauſe of the Houſe of the Lord our 'God, I will ſeek thy good.'

Theſe ineſtimable bleſſings, peace, proſperity, and plenty, we cannot, my fellow-creatures! fellow-citizens! and fellow-chriſtians! expect, that the one bountiful God, and Father, of all ſhould vouchſafe

to beſtow upon us, if we be deficient in a well-tempered active zeal to reform our corrupt conſtitution in church,—and, by aboliſhing ſubſcription to the truth of human ſyſtems of divinity, gradually reſtore the knowledge, and practice, of evangelic truth, and probity, to their native ſimplicity, and purity,—to their original fullneſs of genuine perfection, through the whole human race.

This moſt deſirable event of a yet-unfulfilled prophecy, that 'the earth ſhall be full 'of the knowledge of the Lord,' let us, to the extent of human ability, be inſtrumental in accompliſhing,—particularly by deſtroying thoſe dangerous relics of anti-chriſtian power,—*ſpiritual baronies* and *ſpiritual courts*;—and thus effectually labour to introduce that bleſſed ſcene of things, which God has pre-determined ſhall take place, in his due appointed time:—when chriſtians, forſaking the commandments of men, and following the doctrines of God, ſhall acknowledge 'one true God, the Father, and 'one Lord, Jeſus Chriſt;—when the full-'neſs of the Gentiles ſhall be come in,' in the inſtance of their general converſion to the

the faith of Chriſt; — when this happy event ſhall be followed by the reſtoration of the Jews,—'all' Iſrael 'know the Lord, 'from the leaſt of them unto the greateſt 'of them,'—and, with joy and gratitude, acknowledge their long-neglected Meſſiah;—when the Mohammedan ſhall reject his falſe prophet, and embrace the true prophet, Chriſt; — when, finally, all nations ſhall be gathered together in one, and become 'one fold, under one ſhepherd, Chriſt our Lord, to the praiſe of God, our Father;'—from whom Chriſt receives his ſpiritual kingdom, and to whom, 'when 'all things ſhall be ſubdued unto him,' in a complete victory over ſin, Satan, and death, 'he ſhall deliver up the kingdom, 'that God may be all in all,' and reign without a delegate.

Then ſhall thoſe three grand objects, contained in our Lord's excellent ſummary of petitions, be completely realized, viz. 'the name of our Father, who is in hea-'ven, be' univerſally 'hallowed;' — 'his 'kingdom come,' in the perfect fullneſs of righteouſneſs, peace and love;—and 'his 'will be done in earth, as it is in hea-

ven,'

ven ;' — or his indiſpenſable moral laws of godlineſs, righteouſneſs, charity, and temperance, by which his kingdom is to be immutably governed, equally and evermore obeyed by angels and men.

'To him be glory in the church by 'Chriſt Jeſus, throughout all ages, world without end :'—'to him, the king eternal, 'immortal, inviſible, the only, wiſe, God,'— who has promiſed ('hath he ſaid? and 'ſhall he not do it?') by Chriſt, that man whom he hath ordained to judge the world, to put his faithful and obedient ſervants in poſſeſſion of a ſtate of felicity, defective neither in duration, kind, nor degree ; — in degree perfect, — in kind ſpiritual, — in duration eternal.

FINIS.

ERRATA.

Page 65, line 8, for *Poſtah* read *Pekah*—p. 98, l. laſt, for *argonantic* r. *Argonautic*—p. 116, l. 9, for *laſt* r. *leaſt*—p. 120, l. 10, for *Diotrepes* r. *Diotrephes*—p. 122, l. 1, for *mere* r. *more*—p. 129, l. 8, and p. 134, l. 6, for *fort* r. *tort*—p. 146, l. 5. for *more* r. *mere*—p. 178, l. 10, for *alſo* r. *elſe*—p. 185, l. 4 from the bottom, for יהוה r. יהוה—p. 191, l. 14, for *God's* r. *Gods*—p. 194, l. 14, for *releaſe* r. *relax*—p. 199, l. 2 from the bottom, after *religion* omit the comma—p. 209, l. 12, for *will* r. *well*—p. 216, l. 12, for *repreſſed* r. *expreſſed*—p. 221, l. 17, for 160 r. 161.